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**Dramas with Music: Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the Challenges of  
Music for the Post-War Stage**

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The music created for theatrical productions is notoriously ephemeral. It is not uncommon to find that the only information about a production's music to survive is a credit for the composer and/or performers in the play's program or playbill and, occasionally, a few lines about the music in reviews of the play. We are more fortunate in the case of the debut production of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1947. In 1992 Brenda Murphy provided a detailed discussion of the production's music drawn from archival sources, as part of her research into the nature of the collaborative relationship between Williams and Elia Kazan, the director of the debut production.<sup>1</sup> More recently, additional documentation concerning the play's music has come to light, some of which had previously been sealed to scholars.<sup>2</sup> These discoveries also include a recording of the play's cues performed by the musicians of the second touring company in 1949.

Possible reasons for the survival of the material include the immense success of the original production, and the unique character of the musical world created for it, discussed below. The fact that there were a series of disagreements between the producer and the musicians' union concerning the play's music, along with a number of legal disputes that also concerned the play's music and its musicians, perhaps provides a more pragmatic explanation, however. An exploration of these disputes led me to interview George Avakian, the famed jazz producer, whose role in the production's music has not previously been considered, and which sheds considerable light both on the character of the production's music, and the legal cases which followed.

The debut production of *Streetcar* opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in New York on 3 December 1947 following try-outs in New Haven, Boston and Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup> The producer was the Irene M. Selznick Company, and *Streetcar* was only Irene Selznick's second theatrical

production, and the first to reach Broadway.<sup>4</sup> The success of *Streetcar*'s Broadway run led to productions in theatres across the world within months of the play's debut. While visiting overseas productions of the play, however, Williams was dismayed at the state of the play's music, and suggested that in at least one case the music had "almost ruined the entire mood of the play."<sup>5</sup> As Selznick recognized, the most obvious and efficient means of protecting the integrity of future productions in terms of music would be to offer recordings of the music used in the original production. Indeed, the particular character of the play's music meant that scores, by themselves, could not convey the nature of the music accurately. Most of the play's music falls into one of two categories: the first, described by Williams as a polka tune and referenced by Selznick as Blanche's "memory music", was performed on the world's first polyphonic synthesizer, the Hammond Novachord, with its unique series of alterable parameters; the second category of cues was performed by a live band performing tunes in the manner of the then current revival of Dixieland (traditional) jazz. On the one hand, the Novachord and the sounds it could produce were still relatively novel and, on the other, the difficulties of notating the idiomatic performance attributes of jazz are well known. The American Federation of Musicians refused the company authorization to record the play's music, however. The fact that the request was made during the union's second recording ban in 1948 did not help Selznick's case. This was not the first battle that Selznick entered into with the AFM over *Streetcar*'s music, though. On opening night the union classified *Streetcar* as a "drama with music," i.e., as exemplary of a new classification category introduced in 1946, a judgment that would have a significant impact on the production's budget. The dispute ended with a result that had an impact far greater than Irene M. Selznick Company's music budget for *Streetcar*.

As a play, *Streetcar* is now considered a seminal work of twentieth-century American theatre, and one of the most influential. How exciting, then, that the debut production of this play also provides a fascinating case study of musical practice in post-war theatre. It stands at a nexus in terms of key shifts in the conceptualization of music and music for theatre: between the live

and the recorded, scored versus improvised music, changing approaches to the authorship and ownership of jazz and musical arrangements, and the union's classification system for music performed in theatres. What this reveals about music in American post-war theatre *sui generis* is a moot point, however. Does *Streetcar*'s music reflect standard practice for the period or was it unique? The proliferation of documentation regarding *Streetcar*'s music does, at least, enable us to form a more detailed picture of this production's music than currently exists, and may thus help us to move us further forward in answering this question.

### ***Streetcar's Music Prior to Production***

As a playwright, Tennessee Williams was a serial revisionist.<sup>6</sup> The development of the play that was to become *A Streetcar Named Desire* can be traced back through a number of earlier fragments and drafts.<sup>7</sup> To complicate matters further, published versions of the play's script also differ, and notably so in the treatment of music.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, a reconstruction of the evolution of the play's music is possible.<sup>9</sup>

The play is in eleven scenes, which were organized into three acts for production. The action takes place in a rented two-room apartment in New Orleans, situated next to the L & N railway tracks. A long-widowed sister (Blanche Du Bois) arrives for an extended stay with her younger sibling, Stella. Stella, married to Stanley Kowalski (a second-generation Polish immigrant) is pregnant with their first child. The sisters are the last generation of an aristocratic Southern family fallen on hard times. Blanche stayed on at the family estate (Belle Reve) nursing the older generation until their deaths and the subsequent loss of the estate, while Stella left to pursue a life of her own. Blanche blames herself for her young (and later to be revealed as homosexual) husband's suicide: unbeknown to her husband she had caught a glimpse of him in bed with a man. Later the same evening while on the dance floor at a lakeside casino, she told him that he disgusted her. At this, he pulled away from her, ran outside and shot himself. Blanche

is haunted by the music that was playing as she heard the shot (aka Williams' polka tune); they had been dancing a Varsouviana.<sup>10</sup>

Blanche's arrival has an unsettling effect on the relationship between Stanley and Stella. Stanley is both irritated by and suspicious of his sister-in-law, angered by her patronizing yet flirtatious behavior toward him. Blanche is affronted by Stanley's rough manners and lack of refinement, and disturbed by the physical basis of her sister's love for him. When Blanche meets Stanley's unmarried friend, Mitch, she sees him as a last desperate hope, someone who might protect and take care of her. He finds her imagination and flights of fancy exotic, where, for Blanche, this striving for magic and illusion is a refuge from harsh reality. The situation becomes more complex when we the audience are privy to Blanche's desire for young men, in the form of a collector for a newspaper; she kisses the stranger just moments before Mitch is due to arrive for a date.

The suddenness of Blanche's arrival was apparently due to a leave of absence from her job as a schoolmistress; she tells Stella that she is suffering from shattered nerves. In time Stanley discovers that Blanche was dismissed for indiscretions with a 17-year old student, and hears too of her exploits at a low-class hotel that she was eventually asked to leave. He informs Mitch and thereby destroys her only hope for protection. The night that Stella gives birth to his baby, Stanley extends the hand of friendship to Blanche, but she continues to patronize him. His anger grows as he realizes that her comforting illusions are lies. He flies into a rage and interprets her terror — she smashes a bottle to protect herself — as an invitation for some “rough-house.”<sup>11</sup> He overpowers her. The play ends with Blanche's removal to an asylum; after the rape she loses her grip on reality entirely. Stella refuses to believe her sister as, to do otherwise, would mean the end of her marriage.

The music Williams described as the “polka tune,” also labeled Varsouviana, forms a key role in the play's musical world. As the music that Blanche remembers was playing when her husband shot himself, this was the first musical element Williams integrated into the draft play's

scripts.<sup>12</sup> Prior to the collaboration with Kazan, Williams concentrated the polka cues in the latter half of the play. In scene six, the music enters when Blanche tells Mitch of her husband's death.<sup>13</sup> In scene nine, the cues demonstrate more clearly the disintegration of Blanche's mental state: she drinks to escape the music that invades her mind. Later in the scene, she asks Mitch if he also hears it (which, of course, he can't). In the final scene, Williams suggested that the polka tune enter gently as the Doctor rings the doorbell. Blanche believes that an old beau has come to take her away on a cruise. The music's volume is increased when Blanche realizes this isn't the case, and is finally faded out as she is carried from the apartment. The cue does not close the play, however: Williams gave that role to the "blue piano" [sic] (hereafter, blues piano)<sup>14</sup>, one of a series of cues in a blues or jazz style.

Boyd Johns dates the first mention of blues piano to the professionally typed draft of February 1947 where it features in the opening stage directions for Scene One.<sup>15</sup> Williams placed these blues piano cues, at times expanded to a band of "negro entertainers," or hot trumpet and drums, across several scene changes.<sup>16</sup> Such cues are essentially structural, covering the time needed to change the set and lighting set-ups, and for actors to change costume, but they also offer further opportunities to establish the play's locale, and even provide commentary in places. Blues piano cues were also indicated at key moments within scenes, with placement relatively consistent in that such cues are heard at moments of loss, loneliness, and melancholy<sup>17</sup>, with a modified, more up-tempo version of this music suggested for anxious situations.<sup>18</sup> Williams thus appears to have had more of a conception of the play's use of jazz than has previously been thought, at least in terms of placement.

### ***In Production: the Musical Advisor(s) and the Musicians***

Selznick approached Alan Lomax to take on the play's musical direction. This was an informed choice given the ethnomusicologist's research trips to the southern states of the US and his familiarity with traditional African-American music, not least including extensive interviews

with, and recordings of, Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton for the Library of Congress in 1938.<sup>19</sup> Early discussions with Lomax in June 1947 went well, though a less successful meeting followed.<sup>20</sup> Williams was worried by the ethnomusicologist’s lack of theatrical experience. He was afraid that he was “more the theoretician than ‘implementer.’”<sup>21</sup> Lomax was replaced.

Lehman Engel, a musician far more experienced in producing music for theatre than Lomax, was contracted as the play’s musical advisor in July.<sup>22</sup> How large a role Engel played in developing the play’s music is unclear, however.<sup>23</sup> Having been booked “to ‘do’ the incidental music” for the play, Engel subsequently discovered that he was required only “to *select* (not compose) New Orleans (Dixieland) jazz.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, once Engel started choosing material, he found that Selznick, Kazan and Williams had different and quite specific ideas for the play’s music, with economics playing a key role in the producer’s view.<sup>25</sup> Selznick’s intention was to use music based on “traditional songs or improvised tunes” of the kind she had heard associated with New Orleans “and other hot players.”<sup>26</sup>

Engel’s request to be let out of the contract was refused. Since some form of improvisation would be required, he recognized that the selection of players was key, and that hand-picked men should be used instead of theatre musicians.<sup>27</sup> To that end, he consulted George Avakian, then associated with Columbia Records. Although Engel could not pay him, Avakian was enthusiastic about the project and keen to be involved. In the production’s playbill, Avakian is credited only with “assembling the players,” though it seems he actually played a greater role, consulting with Kazan on the play’s music with, and via Engel; by this point in the proceedings, Williams was not participating much in decision-making concerning the music.

Avakian selected the musicians and began the process of rehearsal by playing a series of Jelly Roll Morton (General Label) records to the group; these were to form a basis for the production’s blues and/or jazz cues.<sup>28</sup> Over the summer a number of Avakian’s first choice musicians became unavailable, and another group of musicians was brought on board days before the first try-out. This final set of musicians comprised John Mehegan (piano), Eddie Barefield

(clarinet), Dick Vance (trumpet), and Denny Strong (drums),<sup>29</sup> with Barefield listed as the official contractor.<sup>30</sup> Late in the day, however, Selznick realized that money could be saved by using songs published by companies owned by her father, L. B. Mayer, notably the Feist-Robbins catalogue, despite already having a suite of music cues in place; several cues from the Feist-Robbins catalogue were used.<sup>31</sup> At the request of Selznick, Barefield later wrote down the band's parts so that a basic reference score would exist.<sup>32</sup>

In production, Williams' blues piano (occasionally with trumpet and drums) was expanded to a four-piece ensemble: trumpet, clarinet, piano and drums. The musicians performed in an upstairs dressing room to give the impression that the music was played by a band in a club located around the corner.<sup>33</sup> Cued by a light and a buzzer activated by the assistant stage manager, the music was broadcast into the theater via speakers located on the stage. Notes made by Selznick during the New Haven try-outs suggest that the arrangement was not as successful as it might have been, however; it sounded as though the musicians were positioned in the wings, rather than from a location around the corner.<sup>34</sup> The problems continued, as is clear from notes made at a technical rehearsal late in November, a week before the show's Broadway debut.<sup>35</sup> A number of suggestions were made with a view to improving the sound of the production's music: changing the size, location, and sound-proofing of the room used by the band, and placing the speakers in alternative positions (for it seems that the speakers could not play the music loudly enough without distortion — alternative mikes were also suggested); to enable Blanche's singing to be heard more clearly, a square should be cut into the bathroom set; a "cheap" piano should be bought and used for the New York run, to create the "tinny" sound required, and the Novachord speakers should be in different positions "rather than one set position". It was even suggested that the Novachord be replaced with a piano with paper or tin-foil inserted ("novachord [sic] [...] always suggests an organ").<sup>36</sup>

The Novachord was played by Max Marlin, and was situated backstage.<sup>37</sup> Marlin was asked by Kazan to "adapt" the tune "Varsouviana" [sic] for the Novachord, for which he provided



a suite of arrangements of the tune “Put Your Little Foot (Right In).”<sup>38</sup> Marlin also performed “Goodnight Ladies” on the Novachord, along with some original compositions, complementary to the Varsouviana cues.<sup>39</sup> While the Novachord can imitate acoustic instruments, it also generates a host of original sounds via the manipulation of several dials and pedal, which enable variability in attack, sustain, decay, and release. The Novachord’s de-familiarized and unique sound helped to establish the idea that the Varsouviana was music heard only by Blanche, though not wholly unambiguously.

### ***In Production: The Varsouviana cues***

Kazan added Varsouviana cues to the first and second scenes, at the first mention of Blanche’s husband, cementing a connection between the Varsouviana and the tragic figure of Grey. In scene one this resulted in the director discarding the blues piano music Williams suggested for the discussion of Belle Reve.<sup>40</sup> Kazan felt that if any incidental music were heard prior to the cue, it would suggest that the Varsouviana was also incidental rather than subjective, i.e. heard only by Blanche.<sup>41</sup> Selznick was clearly also anxious about how this could be conveyed: in notes for Jessica Tandy (playing Blanche), the producer states that Blanche should “always have [a] characteristic gesture, no matter how slight, which indicates she is hearing something unrealistic. Think it should be established very first time V[arsouviana] is used. We should not wait until she is forced to clap hands over ears. Otherwise sounds like movie background music.”<sup>42</sup>

This first of these cues is an arrangement of the traditional American tune “Put Your Little Foot,” (as is the second, third and fifth of the seven Varsouviana cues). The repetition within the melody lends itself to the generation of a lilting waltz rhythm. The two phrases are repeated but the answering phrase gets stuck: the first and second bars are repeated, with increasing volume and speed. Although this is the first time the cue is heard, ideas of haunted repetition and of a life arrested at a significant moment are clear. Blanche’s explanation — that

her young husband died — contrasts with the tune’s major key and light, sunny character. The disjunction implies that there is more to be said on the matter.

[\*\*INSERT Ex. 1 here]

A similar disjunction is created in scene two, though this time within the Varsouviana cue itself. The simplicity of the original tune and accompaniment is made dissonant and melancholic by providing the melody (in A flat major) with an accompaniment in a different key and in the minor mode (A minor), and by moving to the subdominant minor (d min) rather than to the dominant (E). For Selznick, the cue provides the “intangible” correlate to the “tangible evidence” of the love letters: “The minor Varsouviana is her unhappiness. The major Varsouviana is the nostalgia.”<sup>43</sup> The analysis is astute, and highlights the complexity of the relationship between Blanche and her memories of the Varsouviana.<sup>44</sup>

Kazan split Williams’ suggested cue for scene six (when Blanche tells Mitch about her husband) into two parts, and thus better supports the changing emotional landscape of the scene. The first part is a straightforward, largely unaltered version of “Put Your Little Foot,” is cued to begin when Blanche first mentions the drive out to the casino. The second part of the cue (pitched a major third lower, in B flat) begins quietly as Blanche explains why her husband shot himself. It was to be performed at a slightly slower tempo (“tender – sustained”), here with maximum vibrato, increasing in volume but cut off immediately as Mitch kisses Blanche.<sup>45</sup> The Novachord’s settings for this latter cue, along with its slower tempo, emphasize Blanche’s loss and her loneliness as expressed in her telling of her story. In cutting the cue short when Mitch kisses Blanche, regardless of where in the musical phrase this occurs, the music helps to establish that Mitch has the potential to bring her loneliness to an end: he might become her protector.<sup>46</sup>

In production, Williams’ next Varsouviana cue was begun earlier: when Stanley presents Blanche with a bus ticket back to Laurel towards the end of the scene eight, rather than at the start of scene nine.<sup>47</sup> The cue here is the first of Max Marlin’s original pieces composed to complement the Varsouviana cues, and its resemblance to the previous arrangements is clear in

terms of melodic figuration, harmonic language (based on triads), and the waltz rhythm. But here the phrases are heavier and more plodding.<sup>48</sup> The simple (tonic dominant) harmonic language of the previous arrangements are here colored by more slippery harmonies. The original cues composed by Marlin are more overtly melancholy, or appear so, by comparison to the simpler, more sentimental arrangements of “Put Your Little Foot” heard previously. Arguably, they are also more poignant. The specific capabilities of the Novachord were employed to good effect here, by distorting the cue’s sound.<sup>49</sup> At this point, the possibility that Mitch might be a potential suitor has passed. Starting the cue earlier, at the moment that Stanley makes clear that he plans to remove Blanche from his home and send her back to Laurel, links her further retreat from reality more directly to Stanley’s behavior.

Kazan added a further Varsouviana cue in scene nine, at the approach of the Mexican Flower Vendor chanting (“Flores para los muertos”).<sup>50</sup> The cue is a repetition of the Marlin composition heard in the previous scene (scene eight).<sup>51</sup> The return of this Varsouviana-variant ensured that the legacy of Belle Reve loomed large. Both Marlin’s music and the repetitious chanting of the flower seller continue beneath Blanche’s monologue about “death and desire.”<sup>52</sup> This juxtaposition (of the Novachord, the chanting, Blanche’s monologue) generated and supported one of the play’s emotional highpoints: the moment at which Blanche reveals the truth of her past to Mitch.<sup>53</sup>

Kazan retained the last of Williams’ Varsouviana cues, but delayed its entrance in the final scene. Williams had suggested the music enter when Blanche realizes that the Doctor is not her old beau, and play on through the scene until she is carried out. In production, it entered much later, at Blanche’s now infamous line “Whoever you are [...],” and continued until the curtain fell.<sup>54</sup> This final cue was essentially another repetition of Marlin’s original composition, and thus a more melancholic variation of the original Varsouviana tune. Not only would this leave audiences thinking of Blanche, but would perhaps also suggest that the legacy of her later life at Belle Reve contributed to her mental instability. This is a significant shift from Williams’

suggested return to blues piano to close the play, and one that may well have been motivated by the need to balance the performances of Marlon Brando and Jessica Tandy as Stanley and Blanche.<sup>55</sup>

### ***In Production: The jazz cues***

Notes made by Selznick during the New Haven performances suggest some uneasiness concerning the music performed by the jazz band.<sup>56</sup> She felt that the music was “too syncopated” and that the play’s opening music was “too jazzy.”<sup>57</sup> In her view, the play’s music should be “either slow, lonely, miserable blues or slow and very dirty music.”<sup>58</sup> Syncopated, jazzy music persisted, however. In putting the play into production, additional cues were required to cover scene changes, and to open and close Acts. While most of the scene changes were covered by jazz cues, the cues also added value by presenting appropriate local color, i.e. the kind of music that might be heard through the apartment’s louvred windows and doors. The number that opens the play, “Claremont Breakdown,” is a good example.<sup>59</sup> The cue was composed by John Mehegan, and performed by the band.<sup>60</sup> Bright and bouncy with a major key feel and just a smattering of blue notes, the number is basically a 12-bar blues, varied through the progressive verses, incorporating performance elements that support the New Orleans location.<sup>61</sup> The same is true of the second jazz cue, “Winin’ Boy,” which covers the scene change into scene two.<sup>62</sup>

Other curtain, or scene change cues potentially combine this dual function with a third: the possibility that the song’s lyrics may comment upon the action. The arrangement of Byron and Hellman’s “4 or 5 Times,” performed on clarinet, piano and drums, may have functioned in this way. The number signals the start of Act Two (scene four of the play).<sup>63</sup> The lyrics of this popular tune barely attempt to mask their *double-entendre*-character, thus it is possible that some members of the audience may have heard the number as a crude commentary on the action that closes the preceding scene (scene three), discussed below.

In a similar way, the cue that covers the scene change between scenes five and six also appears to comment on the action on stage, though here as a result of instrumentation and musical style.<sup>64</sup> “Woke up Blues” is another 12-bar blues. The number features a mournful though high-pitched clarinet lead, with interjections on trumpet, marked “growl,” the stage directions emphasizing both the cue’s mournful and the “dirty” character.<sup>65</sup> Blanche lavishes her attention on Mitch, who has just arrived, only seconds after we have seen her attempt to seduce a young stranger. Here the musical material clearly comments upon Blanche’s behavior. The cue Williams suggested should cover the change from scene three to scene four offers another example, as Murphy also highlights.<sup>66</sup> In production, the cue, Walter Donaldson’s “Sundown,” was started earlier in the scene, “on Blanche’s line about Stanley’s ‘big, capable hands’”: here, the trumpet “with its direct expression of sexuality, [...] encoded an intense ironic subtext when Blanche tried to escape her own desire.”<sup>67</sup> This was emphasized further a little later, with the trumpet cued “as the tamale vendor was heard calling ‘Red-hot!’”<sup>68</sup>

The presence of music that seems incongruous to the unfolding action invites interpretation. Though Williams indicated “honkytonk music” at the end of scene seven<sup>69</sup>, a point at which Blanche realizes her situation has changed (Stanley has told Stella the sordid details of her sister’s recent life in Laurel), in production, the band performed a short recapitulation of the show’s opening cue, “Claremont Breakdown.” The stage directions urge that the performance emphasize the brash quality of this bright up-tempo number.<sup>70</sup> But why remind us of the start of the play and Blanche’s arrival by including an abridged recapitulation of “Claremont Breakdown?” Was this “nasty stomp” chosen to emphasize Stanley’s lack of compassion toward his sister-in-law? The number certainly seems to form an unexpected backdrop for the dismal birthday supper that it introduces.

Williams also suggested that “honkytonk music” should enter with Stanley in scene ten, and continue through the scene.<sup>71</sup> In production, once “Goodnight Ladies” had been faded out soon after the scene’s opening, the rest of the scene was left unscored. After the black out at the

end of the scene — the moment of the implied rape — the band returns with a rendition of “Wang-Wang Blues,” which continues until the curtain rises on the final scene. This light-hearted, jaunty number follows a 16-bar blues structure.<sup>72</sup> This lithe, upbeat cue seems utterly anempathetic to Blanche and the sexual violence she is subjected to at this point.<sup>73</sup> Neither does it empathize with Stanley’s aggressive domination over her, however. Was it Kazan’s intention that the music should appear so at odds with the preceding action? Or was the cue simply to function as curtain music? The final scene opens with poker banter between Stanley and Pablo, a context that better suits this music certainly, though the mood presented by the music remains significantly counter to that which follows.

Several other jazz cues are contained within scenes and, on two occasions at least, help to present the intensity, and perhaps also the physicality of the relationship between Stella and Stanley. In scene three, for example, the number “F B Blues” enters when Stanley becomes distraught, after beating his wife. The musicians understood the cue’s initials to stand for “Funkey [sic] Butt,” a seemingly trivial piece of information that was to take on more significance in time, as explored below.<sup>74</sup> Stage directions and cues indicate a close association with the scene’s action: “Plaintive, milk it, slide into it [...] STELLAHHHHHH!!!!!! Flash orchestra for clarinet.”<sup>75</sup> The trumpet leads and the clarinet harmonizes through the first 16-bar section, which is repeated. When Stanley wails for his wife the music cuts to another section of the cue<sup>76</sup>, signaling also a change of focus onto the relationship between the couple, as expressed also in Stanley’s distressed calls to Stella, and Stella’s return to Stanley down the stairs from the apartment above.<sup>77</sup> Later, in scene eight, Art Hickman’s popular song, “Rose Room,” is played on piano and clarinet, underscoring Stanley’s attempt to comfort Stella as he holds her in his arms on the porch, explaining that once Blanche has gone and the baby has been born, their relationship — and their sex life — will be rekindled.<sup>78</sup>

The solo piano cue Williams suggested should be heard when Blanche attempts to seduce the boy collector was removed in production. Such a cue may have appeared heavy-handed:

perhaps it would over-emphasize Blanche's carnal needs and thereby paint her character less ambiguously. Another solo piano cue was added in the following scene (scene six), however, at Blanche's somewhat ironic line, "I have old-fashioned ideals," spoken as she halts Mitch's amorous advances. Stage directions for the cue are: "Slow, whimsical, sexy."<sup>79</sup> Perhaps the intention was to emphasize that Blanche is not being entirely honest with Mitch. Given her fears that Mitch would not be interested in her if he knew more about her, the humor implied in underscoring the line with music described as "whimsical, sexy," seems more gentle and affectionate than damning. This simple cue, with its relative lack of blue notes and chromaticism, may have helped to establish Blanche's behavior as coy.<sup>80</sup>

In putting *Streetcar* into production, Williams' original suggestions for blues or jazz cues were expanded, in places removed/replaced, and in others, developed. A good number of these changes were most likely due to the requirements of putting a script on stage, such as adding cues to cover scene changes. In addition, formal boundaries in some cues were used to establish a change of pace or focus on stage. Elsewhere cues were used to encourage empathy with particular characters, or, in their incongruity, perhaps to better reflect the ambivalence that Williams built into the play.

In his preparatory work on the play, Kazan stated that he felt Williams' "blue piano" was appropriate to describe Blanche's lonely, abandoned soul: "It tells, it emotionally reminds you what all the fireworks are caused by."<sup>81</sup> In production, however, the play's blues/jazz cues seems to have been less focused on presenting the "human side" of Blanche, "beneath her frenetic duplicity, her trickery, lies, etc.,"<sup>82</sup> and rather more on setting the locale, and on presenting the latent physical sexuality that lies at the heart of the play, whether characters are conscious of its power, expressing it in their words and actions (Stanley and Stella), or whether the music expresses its power over them, in their denial or suppression of it (Blanche). In this way, it is possible to read the jazz cues as racially coded in quite stereotypical fashion for the period, with the Varsoviana cues their binary opposite.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, in production, empathy for Blanche is

encouraged more by the Varsouviana cues. Indeed, adding Varsouviana cues in the opening scenes helped to assert that Blanche's mental state had been fragile for some time, certainly well before her arrival in New Orleans, and also encouraged the audience to feel some degree of sympathy for the character as she is bundled away by the doctor and matron at the end of the play.

Williams' suggestions for the polka/Varsouviana cues in the pre-production scripts present an interpretation of the play that is arguably more bleak than that which developed as a result of Kazan's and Selznick's involvement. This is true particularly of the play's final scene, where Williams' musical suggestions assert that Blanche's visit changed little for the Kowalskis, the music implying a return to the play's opening. Yet Williams' conception of the blues piano in the pre-production scripts, and as understood by Kazan, seems to engender more sympathy for Blanche. Thus it seems likely that this rebalancing of the play's music in production — with changes made to the number, placement, and character of both the Varsouviana and the jazz cues — was necessary to balance the performances of Tandy and Brando, and to retain the openness to interpretation of Williams' characterization of Blanche and Stanley.<sup>84</sup>

Once the production was up and running, musical concerns turned to what was to become an extended disagreement between Selznick and the union over classification of the play and its music. The dispute resulted in an appeal to the International Executive Board of the American Federation of Musicians (hereafter, AFM). This documentation provides a surprising amount of detail about the production, including not only timings but also insights into how the production's music was conceived by the Selznick company and interpreted by the union (though, of course, these views were somewhat biased). During 1948, the Selznick company requested permission to record the debut production's music. The correspondence between the AFM and the Selznick company, and between Irene M. Selznick and her assistant, Irving Schneider, shows that not only did the AFM refuse the Selznick company permission to record the production's music, it also



refused the company's request to use recordings in theatres. The letters also reveal the genesis of the recordings of the production's cues as performed by the second national touring company in 1949.

### ***Irene M. Selznick Production Company vs the American Federation of Musicians***

Until Labor Day in 1946, the AFM classified theatre productions as either dramas or musicals, with each category entailing a different wage scale and minimum number of musicians.<sup>85</sup> The decision to further supplement these was taken by Local 802, the New York branch of the AFM, following an approach from the League of New York Theatres. According to the Secretary of the Local, Charles R. Iucci, in an article for the *New York Times* published in January 1947, the decision to add the category "drama with music" was taken in response to an aesthetic change.<sup>86</sup> Where previously musicians might have been asked to perform an overture, entr'acte music and an exit march for dramatic productions, often with the selected music unrelated to the production, Iucci noted that more recently composers had been employed to write special scores for dramatic productions, "for atmospheric effect, perhaps." Here though, "The music was not merely incidental; it was an integral part of the performance."<sup>87</sup>

The union's intention in adding a further category was to enable producers to include more music without the need to employ the large number of musicians that productions classified as a musical required. The classification of the production depended on five "guideposts": the amount of music; use of music in the production; the nature of the production; the amount of playing time; and the amount of time the musician is in the pit.<sup>88</sup> Meeting just one of these tests was enough to cause the production be classified as "drama with music." In the same *New York Times* article, Iucci conceded that "the definition of each criterion is not easy," but argued that the union believed the system had worked well in the period that it had been enforced.<sup>89</sup>

The producers did not agree. Rather, this "broad and fluid" approach to the criteria led to a certain amount of confusion.<sup>90</sup> Producers could look into to the classification of other recent

productions of course, but a certain amount of guesswork was also required to budget for music. In the case of *Streetcar*, Selznick's assistant, Irving Schneider, spoke to Charles Iucci in June 1947 to try and gain further insight into the distinctions between the three categories. After discussing the production's musical needs, Iucci told Schneider that he felt certain *Streetcar* would fall into the same class as *The Glass Menagerie* and *Burlesque* — that is, drama — though he added that the production would still need to be reviewed by the Local.<sup>91</sup> A “drama” classification would require that four musicians would need to be booked for the production, paid at dramatic scale. Schneider noted that shows with as much as 15 minutes of music had been classed as “dramatic.” He continued, “It depends on the way the music is used, whether it's purely incidental, atmospheric, or whether it is used for ‘numbers’ or to advance the story.”<sup>92</sup> The shows that had been classed as “drama with music” included Anita Loos' *Happy Birthday* and George Bernard Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*, each of which had involved “pretty lengthy original scores” and required 8–10 players. With Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, the (notated) score was clocked at 45 minutes, the orchestra was in the pit throughout, there was a conductor, and a dance sequence.<sup>93</sup> In that instance, the union had required that the musicians be paid at musical scale.

After viewing *Streetcar* on 1 December 1947, on 3 December — opening night — the Executive Board of Local 802 notified Irene Selznick that the production had been classified as a drama with music, which required a minimum of eight musicians paid at musical scale. This classification would mean a 70% increase in the cost of the play's music.<sup>94</sup> Selznick requested that the Local reclassify the production. The Theatre Committee met to consider the request but upheld the Executive Board's decision. The same decision was given again on 18 December, after Selznick appeared before the Board on 16 December to give her view.<sup>95</sup> On 19 December Selznick wrote a lengthy letter to Charles Iucci in which she stated that she was dismayed at the decision of the Local, which left her with the choice of either removing all music from the play, or fighting the Union over the classification.

It is worth recounting Selznick's "facts on the nature and use of music in the play" as she explained them to Lucci in full:

1. Of the five musicians employed, four of them comprise a jazz band which performs in a dressing room upstairs. Accordingly, they are piped in. The fifth instrument is a novachord [sic], which is played offstage.
2. There are only 82 seconds of music which can conceivably be considered as an integral part of the play. The sole function of this music is to reflect the emotional instability of one of the characters. It is played by one single instrument – the novachord [sic]. No other musicians are involved.
3. Aside from the 82 seconds of integral music, the balance of the music is purely atmospheric and incidental — all or any part of it can be easily eliminated without in any way affecting the play. (As evidence of this fact, I wish to point out that this past summer the author suggested that no music at all be used for fear that it would obtrude on the play, but I prevailed upon him to retain it.)
4. There is no score, and no original music has been written for the show.
5. Although custom has prevailed to use amplification to increase the volume of music, thereby making a small orchestra sound like a large one and causing musicians to be deprived of jobs, our sound-control system is used particularly to reduce the volume of music.
6. The addition of three more musicians is not only a physical impossibility — there is no room for them to play even if we needed them — but the added orchestration would distort the nature and intent of the jazz music; artistically, it would be destructive to our production. (Presently there is one member of the jazz band who is actually superfluous, but we are continuing to use him because he is under contract and to preserve the morale of the ensemble.)

I have done everything possible to seek consultation and collaboration. I have offered to reduce or amend the music, the use of same, the volume of same, the number of cues. If the union did not care to advise me in what way I could amend it to meet the minimum classification, I offered to undertake to do it myself if only the local would be good enough to send a committee to review my efforts to conform.<sup>96</sup>

Selznick continued by noting that the League of New York Theatres arranged an emergency meeting about the *Streetcar* situation without her knowledge; she refused their assistance in the hope that she would be able to demonstrate by her own means that "the union and theatrical managers could collaborate." On the classification of "drama with music," Selznick "regretted to see producers increasingly avoid music with straight plays rather than run the risk of unpredictable and arbitrary classification and the resulting prohibitive costs." Yet the decision to

so classify *Streetcar* — with only 82 seconds of music integral to the play, according to Selznick, and that performed by a single musician — suggests that “Such an attempt by the union is a violation of the spirit which led to the creation of the additional classification.”<sup>97</sup> On the final page of the letter, Selznick quotes from a memo she had just received from her attorney, Morris Ernst, in which he stated that “the position taken by the union violates your legal rights. [...] The union’s position is in general terms one of obvious featherbedding, which is scarcely concealed by the quilt of phraseology contained in concepts such as arbitrarily used by the union for different types of productions.” Selznick closed the letter stating that she hoped she won’t be forced to “defend [her] rights in other forums,” adding that she was not sending a copy of the statement to the press. Not yet anyway. She did, however, send a copy of the letter to James Petrillo, President of the AFM, whom she hoped had been spared this “recent batch of trouble.”<sup>98</sup>

Iucci responded to Selznick a few days later, confirming that she had the right to appeal the decision made by the Local’s Executive Board. An appeal was made: Selznick wrote to Leo Cluesman, Secretary of the AFM, at the end of the month.<sup>99</sup> The International Executive Board acknowledged its receipt of the appeal in January 1948. The next month the Local stated in their rebuttal of the appeal that Selznick had been “less than candid with the International Executive Board”<sup>100</sup>: the musicians play in each act (five times in the first act, five in the second, and eight in the third: a total of eighteen cues) “in response to cues which are given by light signals.” The Local clocked the period the musicians played for as 29 ½ minutes. The Novachord is played alone for nine minutes, twelve if playing at the same time as the band is counted. They added,

We regard “A Streetcar Named Desire” as a drama with music because it makes extensive use of the musicians throughout the play as an integral part of the performance of the play. In a very real sense the musicians are woven into the play as performers therein. They are required to stay at their posts from the opening to the final curtain. They must remain alert throughout the performance to respond to their cues like any other performer of the play. And, however the music itself may be described, it obviously contributes to the dramatic purposes, developments and necessities of the play as performed on stage.<sup>101</sup>

They went on to note that in straight dramatic plays musicians usually perform only Entr'acte music, thus allowing them to do their own thing during the production, unlike the situation with *Streetcar*. Contra Selznick, the Local also argued that the amplification system was used to produce a sound level that was often much louder than that normally produced by four musicians. For all the reasons given, “the decision of the Executive Board of Local 802 should be sustained.”<sup>102</sup>

In their response on 22 February 1948, the Irene M. Selznick Company provided a rebuttal of each statement made by the Local.<sup>103</sup> In particular, the disagreement concerned the designation of cues, and whether or not they contribute “to the dramatic purposes, developments and necessities of the play,”<sup>104</sup> a decision that really requires interpretation. Selznick stated that she never sought to hide the amount of music used in the play — indeed she presented the Local with repeated clockings of the play’s music in support of her argument — but that beyond 82 seconds of music performed on the Novachord, the rest of the music could be “easily eliminated.”<sup>105</sup>

All the other music is jazz emanating presumably from down the street, used to emphasize environment; music used to bridge the waits during scene changes, and other incidental bits which are purely atmospheric. None of this can artistically or practically be said to bear any relation to dialogue, action or plot, and, as many times stated by me, can be easily eliminated.

If the music did not contribute to the atmosphere and effect, if it did not serve the practical use of masking our scene changes, it would indeed be a sorry reflection on me and my fellow workers that we had burdened ourselves with musicians to no fruitful purpose.

For Selznick, a key point was whether a production could be classified as a drama rather than as a drama with music when more than two minutes of music were heard within the play: she noted that several other productions had indeed been so classified. Selznick rebutted the Local’s claim that her musicians were used extensively, since the band performed for only around 20 minutes of music in total, and the Novachord player, under nine minutes. She reiterated her original offer to the Local to reduce the musicians’ playing time to a level that would enable the production to be

classified as a drama, though Selznick felt it was not unreasonable to ask that musicians “must remain alert throughout the performance”; she would expect such an attitude to lie with the musicians themselves. Selznick also rebutted the claim that the amplification system was being used to amplify the sound of the musicians:

[It] is necessary that the music seem remote in order to give a feeling that it is emanating from a distance, presumably down the street. Sound apparatus is therefore used to reduce volume. Although the volume is increased during scene changes, it never exceeds what a four-piece band would produce in the pit.

Inasmuch as we are trying to convey the impression of a small honky-tonk combination in a cheap café of the rather poor French Quarter in New Orleans, the charge that we are trying to simulate a larger orchestra than we employ is a baseless one.<sup>106</sup>

Selznick added that not all four musicians played in every cue; indeed, the decision was made to reduce the band for some cues to serve the purpose of realism.

The Local’s sur-rebuttal to that of the Irene M. Selznick Company was sent on 5 March 1948. Effectively, the decision hung on whether the International Executive Board agreed with the Local that the play’s music contributed to “the dramatic purposes, developments and necessities of the play.” The Board met on 12 June 1948, and on 24 June, the Irene M. Selznick Company was informed that their appeal had been sustained.<sup>107</sup> Irene Selznick had taken on the union and won.

In her autobiography, Selznick stated that as the appeals and rebuttals continued she “enlarged [her] goal.”<sup>108</sup> She felt that bitterness between the union and the producers could be avoided if there were a “formula by which producers could determine musical costs in advance instead of suffering arbitrary decisions after the fact.”<sup>109</sup> So, she went to the top, arranging a meeting with AFM President James Petrillo through a mutual acquaintance. Selznick asked Petrillo to see the show himself, which he did.<sup>110</sup> Selznick recounted that on “whiski[ng]” him into to a bar immediately afterwards Petrillo told her that “he wouldn’t have known there was music in it if [she] hadn’t told him.”<sup>111</sup> Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the pair continued their

conversation at Selznick's apartment.<sup>112</sup> Petrillo made it clear that it was difficult for him to intervene in local matters, but added "new policies might be considered at the union's national convention in June."<sup>113</sup> Indeed, in a brief article published in *Billboard* in November 1948 it was reported that the League of New York Theaters and Local 802 of the AFM were together working on a formula to avoid disputes concerning the classification of scripts that use incidental music as dramas with music.<sup>114</sup> In March 1949, the League contacted their members to explain the agreement with Local 802 with regard to "dramas with music"<sup>115</sup>:

1. The present condition as to the amount of time devoted to overture, entre-acte and exit music plus a brief period of incidental music shall remain as is.
2. If music in a drama does not exceed 25 minutes, and no overture, entre-acte or exit music is placed, the rule shall be four men at the appropriate (contracted or non-contracted) dramatic scale.
3. If some pit music is used and some background music but the aggregate of which does not exceed 25 minutes, the rule shall be the same as in the second category.
4. Such music, however, shall not consist of musical accompaniment to a ballet; grand opera music; vaudeville; singing (in excess of an aggregate of sixteen measures per performance) or regular or interpretative dancing instrumentally accompanied. If such music is used then the musical scale shall apply, and a minimum of six men shall be required.

### ***The AFM, Recordings, and Music for Theatre***

Following its success on Broadway, *Streetcar* was soon performed all over the world, with the first productions overseas appearing in Havana (July 1948), Argentina (September), Brussels and Amsterdam (October), and Mexico (December). By 1949 productions had also opened in Rome (January 1949), Sweden (March), London and Paris (October), and Zurich (November). Selznick also signed two companies for a national tour to satisfy demand. The first of these companies appeared at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in July 1948, while the cast and crew of the original production took a vacation.<sup>116</sup> The same company then embarked on a ten-month tour in September 1948, which began with an extended (five-month) stay at the Harris Theatre, Chicago,

and culminated in a return to New York in July 1949, where the company took over from the original cast until the production closed on Broadway in December 1949.

In March 1948, Selznick contacted Petrillo directly about music for a projected tour by a road company to Chicago. The producer was concerned that she would have to eliminate the production's music for touring productions if the situation became "unduly complicated."

Selznick added that she hoped a means of including music could be found, for "we feel the music adds greatly" (this despite the fact that Selznick was simultaneously arguing that almost all of the production's music would likely be eliminated if the show was not reclassified as a "drama"!)

It was in this context that Selznick asked permission to record the music used in the Broadway production, though it is not clear at this point whether the intention was to use the recording on tour, while paying for the employment of an equivalent number of musicians, or use the recording as a reference to guide the musicians who would perform the music on tour:

Because of many technical difficulties we have encountered in our present operation, and because of the requirements of the Chicago local we trust a plan may be approved whereby such music as we used could be recorded here, and an equal number of men be given employment in Chicago and subsequent cities.<sup>117</sup>

Selznick's letter was forwarded to the Secretary of the Local in Chicago, Edward Benkert, who also recognized the possibly intentional ambiguity concerning use of the recording. In her response, Selznick made clear that her intention was to use recordings of the musicians currently performing in the Broadway production, while employing the same number of live musicians in the theatre in Chicago.<sup>118</sup> There were three points to her argument: first, that the jazz is used "in incidental fashion to emphasize environment, to bring the waits between the numerous scenes and to heighten mood and atmosphere"; second, that despite placing the musicians in an upstairs dressing-room and piping in their performance, it has not been possible to maintain consistent sound levels across performances; third, because the music is improvisatory there is no written score, though there are definite numbers — thus not only do sound levels vary, but so do interpretations in the performance of the music. In order to avoid such situations with the road



company “which can seriously affect the balance of the over-all performance and only lead us to the drastic possibility of removing all music,” Selznick argued that recording seemed “the most practical solution,” hence her consultation of Mr Benkert.<sup>119</sup> Once again she stressed that her plan was not to displace musicians, for she planned to employ as many “as were required in making the recordings.”<sup>120</sup>

Selznick’s response was forwarded to Petrillo, who in turn responded on 19 April 1948. Petrillo stated that the request could not be allowed due to the AFM’s recording ban.<sup>121</sup> He informed Selznick that, following discussion with the union’s attorneys, “our entire recording position would be prejudiced if we granted the request you made. Hence, I regret that permission cannot be given you to make the recording.”<sup>122</sup> Selznick responded to Petrillo on 4 May 1948, naming a precedent: the Theatre Guild play, *Foolish Nation*, “which used musicians in New York, was allowed to use a recorded version of its music not only in Chicago but throughout the country on tour.”<sup>123</sup> The producer also noted that touring productions of Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie* also enjoyed the “privilege of using records.”<sup>124</sup> With regard to compromising the union’s “entire recording position,” Selznick stated that her intention had been to favor this by including a “comparable complement of live musicians.”<sup>125</sup> For fear that the earlier request was misunderstood, she included a summary of her position:

- (a) I intend to provide employment for an equal number of musicians, and
- (b) my reason for requesting the use of recordings is purely an artistic one — it is the only practice and balanced method of projecting the music peculiar to this play and production.<sup>126</sup>

There was no response.

Selznick wrote to Petrillo again on 22 July 1948, enclosing a copy of her previous letter. Meanwhile Schneider continued to try and identify possible musicians for the tour, necessary if permission for a recording was not forthcoming. His problems included finding hand-picked men to play for scale (since the Schuberts were apparently unlikely to share on over-scale rates), and locating a Novachord, given that no further instruments were being manufactured, though he also

noted that the main Hammond office was in Chicago. Schneider asked George Avakian for advice once more, then passed on the list of suggested names to Pete Cavallo, a Chicago-based contractor.<sup>127</sup> In the end, Schneider managed to persuade Eddie Barefield, the clarinetist and contractor from the original Broadway production, to audition the musicians to be booked for Chicago, and to assist with passing on the music.<sup>128</sup>

Petrillo responded to Selznick's July letter with a reiteration of his earlier point, that for legalistic reasons her request to make recordings could not be granted since the AFM's "interests would be prejudiced" as a result.<sup>129</sup> The subject was closed until Selznick reopened the matter in April 1949.<sup>130</sup> Here the producer was following up recent discussions with Rex Riccardi, Petrillo's executive assistant, including a request for permission to have a "library recording made of the music used in both the New York and touring companies."<sup>131</sup> Once again, the reasons she gave were three-fold: first, that there be a permanent record for the purpose of archiving the production – a reference copy which could be used by future revivals; second, to help the musicians stay on track<sup>132</sup>; third, for use only in dire emergencies, particularly with regard to the touring company, in case of musicians missing train connections, or being ill. Selznick offered to post a bond to ensure that such a recording would only be used in the circumstances described, with the company "submitted to a severe financial penalty" should infractions occur.<sup>133</sup> In addition, given that she was due to co-produce the play in London shortly, she also asked for permission to use such a recording there, since the musicians' union in Britain "has always permitted the use of recordings for dramatic plays."<sup>134</sup> Her view was that no US musicians would lose work, since they would not have been allowed to play in London Theatres anyway; no UK musicians would lose work, since the use of recordings was apparently common practice; US musicians would benefit by receiving additional compensation for recording the music. Even if English musicians were contracted to perform the play's music, given the improvisatory nature of the music and the lack of a score, the only means by which these musicians could hear the original music would be via a recording. Riccardi declined Selznick's request, worried that a

precedent would be set. In the view of the producer, such precedents already existed, though without the AFM's consent.

From Petrillo's response it is clear that the problem was not now the recording ban directly (which ended on 14 December 1948), but rather the closely related issue of the displacement of live musicians by recordings:

I should like to point out that we have never permitted any other company to make the type of recordings that you request. If such recordings were made and used, they were made and used without our knowledge and consent.

As a matter of policy, Federation cannot grant you permission to make and use the recordings that you describe. I deeply regret this, but I have no choice in the matter, and I am sure you will understand when I tell you that it involves a fundamental principle of the Federation.<sup>135</sup>

Having tried and failed to gain the cooperation of the AFM in making these recordings, it appears that the Irene M. Selznick Company went ahead and made the recordings anyway.<sup>136</sup>

Selznick was in Europe for much of the period, and letters between the producer and her assistant, Irving Schneider, provide details of the developing situation. In the summer of 1949, Thomas J. Valentino was engaged to make the recording; he already had a five-year contract with the union to make recordings, which had started when the second recording ban ended.<sup>137</sup>

Valentino put in a recording request to the Local, but they were somehow tipped off that it was for *Streetcar*.<sup>138</sup>

On each job, [Valentino] sends in a contract form to the Local, listing the names of the musicians, the monies due the musicians, the date and place. He is usually not obligated to list what music he is recording. Most of the time he will say "mood music," or "background music," just as the Muzak firm would do. This is how they got away with *Death of a Salesman* records. He did not specify that it was for the show. Just the names of the musicians. I'm sure the Local man – I think it's Knopf – must have recognized from the names of the men on the *Salesman* application and must have known what was going on, but since nobody around was talking, he could let it slip through. (I'm sure that Valentino slipped him some dough. As a matter of fact, I know it, and I know he tried to do the same on ours.) However, since the secret on *Streetcar* became so open, he got cold feet, and therefore, it was referred to higher chambers.<sup>139</sup>

Next, Schneider tried tape recording or “out and out bootlegging.”<sup>140</sup> It was not possible to record the music in the theatre, however, because there was an understanding between the stagehands’ union and the AFM; the stagehands were in control of any “tape or wire recording machines brought into the theatre.”<sup>141</sup> Schneider was worried that the AFM would undoubtedly be informed were he to take this route. Instead, Valentino tried to persuade Barefield “to record it in bootleg fashion out in Long Island,” but the musician felt it was too risky, despite the compensation on offer.<sup>142</sup> Barefield was even offered a set of new musicians who were nothing to do with the production, which he would rehearse for the job, “but still he was shaking in his boots about it and wouldn’t do it.”<sup>143</sup> Without someone to rehearse new musicians, this approach was also out.

Schneider’s next plan was to record the music played by the number two group in San Francisco, far away from Local 802. He explained that he might have to talk to J. E. (Don) Cardon himself — Cardon led the other musicians in this touring company — though he hoped to keep a distance from the deal itself. After seeking legal advice, Valentino believed that the union was violating his 5-year contract, “since it is supposed to cover any kind of music.”<sup>144</sup> Schneider persuaded Valentino not to challenge the union over the situation, however, since it would slow down the process and would probably cost money, with the Selznick Company having to foot some of the bill.<sup>145</sup>

The situation took another intriguing turn just days later when Schneider contacted Riccardi with a new request. Selznick had been approached by the producers of the French production of *Streetcar* over the music, leading to a new and further potential benefit to the musicians in the original production:

Quite obviously they are at a loss as to how to duplicate the required music. Mrs. Selznick advises me that the producers are willing to pay royalty to musicians here for recording the music for exclusive use in their production. Apparently, the play is already in rehearsal for Mrs. Selznick emphasized that the time element was vital and could an immediate answer be obtained.

I can quite understand the difficulties these foreign producers are encountering. As you know most of the music is of an improvisatory nature, and there is no orchestration in the usual sense available to indicate sufficiently the quality and manner of interpretation. We here had a similar experience when the road company of the play was formed. It was necessary to bring the road musicians in from Chicago to listen to and be coached by the musicians here at the Barrymore, and eventually we had to send out our leader to rehearse them on the road.<sup>146</sup>

Schneider went on to explain that the music in productions the world over had hitherto largely been unsatisfactory, for while detailed instructions can be sent overseas for all other theatrical elements, this was not the case with the play's music. He urged again that a recording by the original musicians would solve the problem, even if it were only to be used as a guide.

Max Siegel, of the Selznick Company, continued discussions with Riccardi while Schneider traveled to San Francisco. On 23 August 1949, the Selznick Company received another letter from Petrillo, again refusing to give authorization to make recordings of the production's music. Siegel urged the union to reconsider in a letter sent the next day. Here an additional argument was made in light of a plea from Tennessee Williams, after he "witnessed several reproductions of his play abroad, notably in Rome and in Scandinavian countries, and was appalled by the music he heard and felt that artistically this faulty music distorted, and in one case almost ruined, the entire mood of the play."<sup>147</sup> Siegel emphasized that the French producers were willing to pay the American musicians a royalty as well as a recording fee. He pointed out that if the union refused to authorize the recording, it would deprive the American musicians of additional earnings. Siegel reiterated that the recordings would never be used by either of the two American companies. Petrillo responded a week later, 30 August 1949, once again refusing to permit that a recording of the music be made.

As September began, the plot thickened. Through Valentino someone in San Francisco had been found who would record the music.<sup>148</sup> Cardon was brought on board by a figure outside of the Selznick Company, and the other musicians joined him.<sup>149</sup> Unable to secure a Novachord outside of the theatre, the group decided to record the Novachord in the theatre at 6.30am, before

to the arrival of the doormen and stagehands at 8am. But the recordist was late, “which explains why one or two of the novachord [sic] cues are not altogether satisfactory.”<sup>150</sup> Things did not go according to plan in recording the jazz cues either. Valentino’s contact identified a studio where the owner was away, and where the engineer was talked into accepting the job. But the owner returned early:

The recording had been made but had not been transcribed from tape to acetate, and all material was still in the hands of the studio. The first report from the owner was that someone had reported the recording job. This threw us all into a tizzy for twelve hours. Then it turned out to be unfounded, that the owner was really afraid of the whole idea, that some other studio had been caught the previous week and he was afraid of losing his license. Our woman spent hours with him, and was finally able to persuade him to release all the material to her to get all the evidence out of his office. All this happened after I cabled you that “recording accomplished” message.<sup>151</sup>

The excitement continued in New York where, soon afterwards, Valentino and others were working on the master in a union studio, when

in walked an inspector, and they all had to run. But [sic] for a time there it looked like the end of everything. Jean grabbed her script and ran, Ethel pretended to be a poor little secretary who didn’t know what she was working on, and Valentino double talked (I hope). We may yet not hear the end of it.<sup>152</sup>

Nonetheless, it appears that the recordings had arrived in London by 6 September 1949.<sup>153</sup> Within a week, Laurence Olivier, director of the London production, had heard the recordings, but according to Selznick “was displeased that the recordings are timed and that the fades are in.”<sup>154</sup> Selznick was by then certain that Olivier had never intended to use the recordings: “He has always wanted an orchestra. He is presently having the score taken down from recordings and is going to have new V[arsouviana]. recordings made, (which I don’t believe. He is just going to re-record ours) and then plans to use a live orchestra for the rest.”<sup>155</sup> Apparently Olivier had also been considering incorporating recordings used in Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie*.<sup>156</sup>

On 22 September 1949, the Selznick Company received a wire from Petrillo, granting them permission to record the music:

You may accept this wire as authorization and permission to make recordings of the show *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The recordings however may only be used abroad. Under no circumstances may they be used in the United States and Canada. It is understood that the musicians making the recordings will receive the prescribed fee for their services.<sup>157</sup>

The reason for the sudden the turnaround is not entirely clear, but perhaps Petrillo had not been in receipt of the full information concerning the offer of additional payments to the American musicians by the French producers.

The recordings exist on a set of four 78rpm shellac discs among the *Streetcar* Production files in the Irene M. Selznick Collection.<sup>158</sup> They match the handwritten scores for the music cues held within the same collection: the score of the jazz cues handwritten by Eddie Barefield some weeks after the production had started, and cues for the Novachord, including the instrument's settings. I was able to play a copy of these recordings to George Avakian, only to hear his disappointment at what must have happened to the music through the many performances, and two companies, since the production's debut on Broadway.<sup>159</sup> Avakian recognized several of the numbers — notably “Claremont Breakdown” and “Morningside Blues” — but was dismayed at the performances; they were only a pale imitation of those that he had been instrumental in producing from the players who had opened the show on Broadway for, despite his contractual difficulties with the Selznick Company (or rather lack-of-contract difficulties), Avakian visited the production regularly in its opening weeks at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre. He suggests that a better sense of the sound of these performances can be heard via the recordings of Sidney Bechet with Bob Wilber's Wildcats that he made in July 1947.<sup>160</sup>

### ***Jazz and Copyright***

George Avakian had taken in copies of a series of Ferdinand “Jelly Roll” Morton records to the musicians he was rehearsing for the production; he considered these records representative of the style of music he hoped that they would replicate, since they were Morton's reminiscences of an earlier time in New Orleans.<sup>161</sup> Relatively late in his life Morton had formed his own publishing

company with his friend Roy Carew (Morton died in 1941). Carew was an ardent fan of Morton's music and realized that Morton had not protected his copyrights well. The company Tempo Music was formed in 1938 and in this an attempt was made to take control of what remained of Morton's legacy. In a study of Morton's time on the West Coast of the US, Phil Pastras noted recently that of the twenty four works copyrighted by Tempo, most were unremarkable, though the collection also included a small number of his best pieces. In addition the publisher had laid claim to "two pieces that were not Morton's but had never been copyrighted by anyone else: 'Buddy Bolden's Blues' and 'Mamie's Blues' [...], tunes that have long been considered blues and jazz standards."<sup>162</sup> Although Morton died in 1941, in time his estate was to benefit from Carew's move.

In 1950 Roy Carew brought a case against Irene Selznick (as the Irene M. Selznick Company), Lehman Engel, and Elia Kazan regarding the use of two songs by Jelly Roll Morton in the production of *Streetcar* without permission or payment: "F. B. Blues" and "Winin' Boy." In response, the company's lawyer, Howard Reinheimer, began collecting information from the Selznick Company concerning the use of music in *Streetcar* in December 1950. Irving Schneider presented the lawyer with a list of the show's music cues and an outline of the situation in the final days of rehearsal:

It was in the latter stage of rehearsal that the numbers were selected. At the time, we all made efforts to use either public domain tunes or those from the Feist-Robbins catalogue, which had been made available to us. According to my records, both "F. B. Blues" and "Winin' Boy" were deemed public domain materials. I do recall at the time that many inquires [sic] were made to ASCAP to determine the status of song material. These calls were made at various times by the assistant stage manager, Joanna Albus, the secretary here in the office, and I assume Lehman Engel himself. As regards the written score for the jazz music: You may remember that our jazz musicians took certain melodies, many of them traditional, and improvised arrangements. They were done on the spot and were not written down. It was not until many weeks after the New York opening that the leader of the group finally wrote down as close a written arrangement of what was being played as possible. [...] If I may surmise, I gather from talks to jazz musicians that many so-called copyrighted numbers are actually adaptations of traditional tunes. I am wondering if this applies in the case of the two Jelly Roll Morton items. Are they traditional tunes that Jelly Roll adapted?<sup>163</sup>



Schneider provided Irene Selznick with an update on the situation in June 1951, informing her that she would have to appear before Carew's lawyer for an interrogation. As Schneider understood it, "Jelly Roll was one of the first 'musicians' in the New Orleans area, who could compose, arrange — unlike most of the others who just blew things out of their head. There are a great many songs attributed to Jelly Roll, but it seems generally agreed that traditional blues and other items are the bases [sic] of some or all of them."<sup>164</sup>

"F. B. Blues" was "used immediately after the fight scene, and through the scene of Kim coming down the stairs, etc.." Barefield stated that he was taught to play the song by Sidney Bechet in the mid-1930s, but that he didn't know that it was also known as "I Thought I Heard Buddy Bolden Say" by Morton. As a result, when the song was checked with both ASCAP and BMI for copyright, no record was found and it was thus "assumed to be traditional."<sup>165</sup> None of the musicians could remember who had raised the number "for consideration," though apparently Avakian told Reinheimer's office that "he was pretty sure he had suggested both F. B. and Winin' Boy, and had considered them at the time as traditional or public domain material."<sup>166</sup> Schneider added that he thought this was likely, though equally he didn't feel able to rely on Avakian's testimony because the musician had also offered to testify for Carew by telling them that he had taught the musicians to play songs from Jelly Roll Morton records he had played to them. "In other words, even if they were only arrangements, the arrangements were being infringed upon."<sup>167</sup> Schneider noted that Barefield refuted Avakian's statement and testified to the same. Schneider reminded Selznick of Avakian's earlier suit against the musicians, which had also rested on proving how much involvement he had had in the development of the show's music, and which had been thrown out of court.

Reinheimer engaged a musicologist, Mr. Alex Kramer, who "made a thorough investigation of the plaintiff's songs and of prior art, as well as research into the life of 'Jelly Roll' Morton."<sup>168</sup> It seems that Kramer was engaged in the hope of proving that Morton did not compose the two songs. With "Buddy Bolden's Blues," Kramer met with some success: in an

article in *Downbeat* from 1938 written by Morton, the composer had stated that another musician, Buddy Bolden, wrote “I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say.”<sup>169</sup> The musicologist also discovered that the song was identical to “St. Louis Tickle” which had been published in 1904, becoming public domain in 1932.<sup>170</sup> In his own deposition, Carew stated that that “St. Louis Tickle” was a variant of “Buddy Bolden’s Blues.” The show’s musicians were unaware of this title, however: the reference score used the title “F. B. Blues,” where they understood the initials to stand for “Funkey [sic] Butt,” though these words “apparently appear in a salacious version of ‘Buddy Bolden’s Blues’.”<sup>171</sup>

With “Winin’ Boy,” the musicians in the show believed the song to be a “traditional folk ballad,” though they could offer no evidence to support this. Kramer established that as performed in the show, the song was indeed “substantially” similar to the music in “Winin’ Boy Blues,” registered for copyright by Carew for Morton in 1939–40. Kramer was also able to find “similar sequences of notes in earlier works,” however, including “Just a Year Ago Tonight” (1933), “On the Winding Santa Fe” (1930), “Don’t Cross the Blues” (1944), and in an anonymous composition from 1909 not under copyright.<sup>172</sup> In addition, the wording on a recording contract between Carew and RCA for a recording by Morton that featured “Winin’ Boy,” lists the song itself as “traditional,” with Morton named as arranger.

Evidence was also found to suggest that a recording of “Winin’ Boy” was made prior to the date of the song’s first registration of copyright. It was not known whether copies were sold, or whether the recording was used for public performance. Da Silva noted a legal precedent where it had been decided that “the making and distribution of commercial phonograph records prior to the copyrighting constitutes publication, which dedicates the song to the public and forfeits the right to obtain a valid statutory copyright.” The lawyer also noted however that the case was “regarded by copyright lawyers as bad law,” thus, as a precedent, it could not guarantee the outcome they hoped for in a case in New York.<sup>173</sup> In addition, the fact that “the words “Winin’ Boy” appeared on the score of the show and upon records of the show’s music” did not

help the Selznick Company's case.<sup>174</sup> Carew settled out of court with the Selznick Company in July 1953: for dismissing his claim against the company he received a payment of \$6,750.00.<sup>175</sup>

Max Marlin was not so successful in his claim against the Selznick Company. Marlin's attorney, Robert Helfand outlined the musician's claim in January 1958: it concerned Marlin's commission to "provide the score for the production of *Streetcar Named Desire* after the background mood music, written by Lehman Engel, was discarded prior to that play's initial performance [...]. Mr Marlin's subsequent composition was incorporated in the show and despite countless promises of remuneration for his efforts in that regard, he has received absolutely no compensation whatever."<sup>176</sup> Marlin hoped that the letter would open negotiations with the company to settle the matter out of court. A handwritten note on the letter suggests that given that the statute of limitations in such claims is six years, no case could be brought successfully. There would thus be no need to open negotiations with the composer.

These cases suggest that the relationship between copyright and musical arrangements was perhaps not as clear as it could have been at this point, particularly in the case of jazz arrangements. Multiple titles for the same or highly similar numbers also caused confusion. Tempo Music's copyrighting of "Buddy Bolden's Blues" appears astute, and perhaps went some way toward providing recompense for the many situations where Morton had not benefited from copyright, as a jazz composer, arranger, improviser, and performer. By contrast, the handwritten note on the letter from Marlin's attorney states that whatever the situation, the musician had applied too late. The fact that Marlin was paid more than the other musicians (with the exception of the stated contractor), even after rental of the Novachord is excluded, suggests that — at least as far as the Selznick company was concerned — he had received financial reward to cover the use of his arrangement (or composition), as had the band's pianist, John Mehegan.

## **Conclusion**

With the exception of canonic musicals perhaps, relatively little is known about theatre music in New York in the post-war period. The wealth of surviving documentation concerning *Streetcar*'s music suggests, however, that it may be possible that more information survives than we have thus far assumed. Though we may already be too late to obtain oral histories from the musicians, directors, and producers, as more and more archives are made accessible to the researcher, and as finding aids for such archives are digitized and published online, so it may become possible to build a much more rich and detailed picture of the use of music in theatrical productions in the post-war period.

Music clearly played an important role in the Selznick Company's presentation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* on Broadway during its spectacular original run of 855 performances, despite Irene Selznick's arguments to the contrary as presented during the classification dispute with the AFM. Consideration was given to Blanche's memory music, to ensure that it conveyed the sense that it was to be heard as subjective, as is evident in the discussions and decisions made concerning the choice of the Novachord and its settings, the means of transmitting its sound into the auditorium, the composition and arrangement of the cues, the actor's physical gestures, and even the placement of other cues in relation to it. Detailed attention was also paid to the selection, arrangement, and performance of authentic music to provide added value in covering scene changes, and establishing the locale of the play. Contemporary technology was key. Through the transmission of a musical performance happening elsewhere in the theatre, the company attempted to simulate the acoustic signature of a band performing around the corner from the apartment presented on stage, and in doing so an opportunity was opened up for the music to act as commentary. In his score for the 1951 film adaptation, also directed by Kazan, Alex North developed this ambiguity further.<sup>177</sup>

Kazan's contribution to musical decisions was clearly vital. His direction, but also his discussion and collaboration with Williams, Selznick, Engel, Avakian, Marlin and others, created what is perhaps a less harsh interpretation of *Streetcar* than that which exists in Williams' pre-

production scripts, and music played a key role in this. In production, placing additional Varsouviana cues earlier in the play suggested that Blanche's mental state was fragile prior to her arrival in New Orleans. As Murphy highlights, introducing Varsouviana cues throughout the play also integrated it with the music of the band, that which drifts into the apartment from the Four Deuces bar, "embedding the play's juxtaposition of subjectivity and objectivity in the production's musical code."<sup>178</sup> Elsewhere I have argued that the changes made by Kazan in the course of rehearsals and try-outs generally "amplified elements already present in Williams' scripts, notably the use of music in juxtaposition or counterpoint with dialogue, emphasizing the dramatic purpose of these devices more pointedly, as with 'Sugar Blues,' for example."<sup>179</sup> Indeed, Williams' suggestions in the pre-production scripts present a relatively sophisticated conception of music, and one that is integral to the play.<sup>180</sup> While Selznick was correct that much of the music could have been removed while keeping the heart of the play intact, such a production would have been far less rich and subtle than the one that ran at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre from 1947–49.

*Streetcar* would have presented a borderline case for classification under the formula that resulted from Selznick's appeal, but its development, Selznick's appeal against classification, and the debate that ensued provides a wealth of information about the show's music in production. These documents also highlight at least two other important points that future research could usefully explore. First, that the New York League of Theatres believed there was an aesthetic transformation in process with regard to the commissioning of scores for plays in the period. Second, that not only was an agreed formulae necessary to enable producers to budget adequately for their music in light of classification, the formulae may have allowed producers to make greater use of music within plays from this point on.

The correspondence concerning Selznick's repeated attempts to obtain permission to record *Streetcar*'s music provides copious explanatory information that the 78rpm records lack, alongside insight into how the AFM understood their strategies for the recording ban, and for the

use of recorded music, in relation to theatre musicians and theatrical production. It is not clear, however, why it took so long after the end of the recording ban for Selznick to gain permission to make the archive recordings. The delay meant that the recordings that were finally made, in a somewhat surreptitious manner, and bizarrely just days before the AFM's authorization, were not recordings of the musicians who performed in the original production, but those at one remove, possibly two. While Barefield's score more or less matches the music captured on the records, without witnessing George Avakian's disappointment on hearing the recordings, I might have understood the recordings on less critical terms, as stand ins for what audiences in the Ethel Barrymore Theatre actually heard.

Selznick supported the decision to employ jazz musicians to supply the music for *Streetcar*, agreeing to pay them above-scale fees, and offering them run-of-play contracts at the behest of Avakian and Engel, over fears that — since they were not theatre musicians — as other work came up, they would likely leave the production.<sup>181</sup> Employing jazz musicians to improvise around specified numbers, even improvising their own numbers in three cases, also meant that Selznick gained added value from the musicians: employing composers and/or arrangers for the price of performers, we might say. While Mehegan appears to have received a premium for the additional labor involved in creating the three improvisations/numbers with which he is credited, since these numbers were effectively owned by the Selznick company, he would gain no further income from their performance in future productions. The notion of intellectual property is thus moot here, as the dispute over the unauthorized use of works under copyright to Tempo Music reveals, particularly in relation to the genealogies of blues and jazz tunes, and those deemed traditional. The same confusion is emphasized by the fact that Carew was able to lay claim to other copyrights as a means of offsetting the loss of income Morton had experienced in previous years, and by the fact that Selznick Company staff were not able to locate copyright owners for “Winin’ Boy” and “F. B. Blues.” Improvising jazz musicians are, of course, still burdened with some of the same difficulties that result from their hybridized character as composer performers.

Yet the excitement, the edginess of having improvising musicians reproduce the atmospheric sound of New Orleans in the theatre each night also brought with it certain risks for the producer: in particular, the difficulties inherent in replicating the musicians' performances when the production was mounted elsewhere. For Selznick, recordings offered the solution to the problems of live performance entailed in this kind of music: that it is embodied in particular musicians, and that musical interpretation and dynamics would vary through the course of production. In short, recordings would allow Selznick to regularize — and control — the music for *Streetcar*. The AFM was involved in a much greater battle at this time, however: the displacement of live musicians by recorded music. Indeed, if Tim J. Anderson is correct in his assessment that “the two nationwide recording bans, their resolution, and the loss of power by the AFM [...] signal the end of a music industry based on performances and the beginning of one in which the production of recordings creates a standing reserve of music,” then we should not wonder at the AFM's reluctance to grant Selznick permission to use recordings in theatrical productions.<sup>182</sup> The union had much more to lose. The threat of musicians' unemployment grew exponentially from the arrival of synchronized film sound and its displacement of cinema musicians, through the increased popularity of jukeboxes in other public spaces such as hotels, bars, and restaurants — which the economic downturn of the Depression helped to support — and the use of commercial recordings on radio.<sup>183</sup> While the union won some concessions in the agreements that signaled the end of the recording bans of 1941–2 and 1948, the battle itself was not won. The union's crusade — that musicians be engaged to perform live instead of using recorded music — continues. As I write, the AFM is leading a campaign to “Save Live Music on Broadway.”<sup>184</sup> This action follows strikes on Broadway over the same issue in 1975 and 2003. Following James P. Kraft, it seems that “until society comes to view technological change as a social problem as well as a matter of labor productivity,” dramas with music will persist.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brenda Murphy, *Tennessee Williams & Elia Kazan: A Collaboration in the Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 28–33. Both Murphy and Williams' scholar, Philip C. Kolin, misattribute composition of the production's music to Alex North, who was to score the film adaptation in 1950–51, also under the direction of Kazan. Kazan elided the play and the film in the discussion of *Streetcar*'s music in his autobiography. Elia Kazan, *A Life* (London: André Deutsch, 1988). Philip C Kolin, *Williams: A Streetcar Named Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16.

<sup>2</sup> The key collections this research draws upon are: The Tennessee Williams Collection, The Audrey Wood Collection, and The Theater Arts Collection, held by the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin — these collections hold the majority of the pre-production materials, correspondence to and from Williams and Wood, plus copies of the Novachord cues and some of Barefield's handwritten parts for the jazz band cues, and the stage manager's Prompt script; the Irene Mayer Selznick Collection, held by the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University — this collection includes a pre-production script, the production files for the 1947 stage production of *Streetcar* and the touring companies which followed, the Novachord cues, Barefield's handwritten short score of the jazz cues, and recordings made in 1949 by the musicians of the second national company, and correspondence to and from Irene M. Selznick; the Elia Kazan Collection is held within the Cinema Archives of Wesleyan University — this collection includes the director's notebook, an annotated rehearsal script, and letters.

<sup>3</sup> In New Haven, performances ran from Thursday 30 October to Saturday 1 November 1947. In Boston, performances ran in the week beginning Monday 3 November at the Wilbur Theatre. The Philadelphia run was longer, from 17–29 November 1947.

<sup>4</sup> Selznick's first production had been Arthur Laurent's *Heart Song*, which had closed during try-outs. The show's failure was not considered to be a reflection on Selznick's nascent skills as a theatrical producer, however. See letter from Audrey Wood to Tennessee Williams, dated 18 April 1947. Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin (hereafter HRHRC UT).

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<sup>5</sup> Letter from Max Siegel (of Irene M. Selznick Company) to Mr Rex Riccardi (AFM), 24 August 1949. Williams was unhappy with the music in the Swedish and Rome productions. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center, Boston University (hereafter HGARC BU). Box 45, Folder 37.

<sup>6</sup> As George W Crandell notes “Williams never thought of a work as finished”. Crandell, “Texts,” in Philip C. Kolin (ed), *The Tennessee Williams Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 269. In terms of *Streetcar*, see, Sarah Boyd Johns, “Williams’ Journey to *Streetcar*: An Analysis of Pre-Production Manuscripts of ‘A Streetcar Named Desire,’” PhD thesis (University of South Carolina, 1980); Vivienne Dickson, “*A Streetcar Named Desire*: Its Development through the Manuscripts,” in *Tennessee Williams: A Tribute*, ed. Jac Thorpe (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1977), 154–171; Murphy, *Tennessee Williams & Elia Kazan*, 20–23.

<sup>7</sup> Some of these fragments and drafts have titles (e.g. *Electric Avenue*, *Go, Said the Bird!*, *The Primary Colors*, *The Poker Night*), others are untitled, some are dated, some are not. See, Brenda Murphy, *Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan*, 20–23; Sarah Boyd Johns, “Williams’ Journey to *Streetcar*”; Vivienne Dickson, “*A Streetcar Named Desire*”.

<sup>8</sup> In general terms, the reading version of the play is similar (though not identical) to Williams’ pre-production scripts, while the Acting Version is closer to the play in production in terms of music cues. Brenda Murphy notes that although the reading version of the play published by New Directions is fundamentally the same as the pre-production script, significant differences can be found between the two in several of the play’s elements. Music is one of these. Brenda Murphy, *Tennessee Williams & Elia Kazan*, 22–23.

<sup>9</sup> My interpretation of the role of music in *Streetcar* prior to rehearsal and production draws on mss. held in the Collections of Tennessee Williams and Audrey Wood (Williams’ agent), at the Harry Ransom Center, along with typed versions of these pre-production scripts held by the Historic New Orleans Collection, and the Irene Mayer Selznick Collection, alongside views of the play’s development presented by Johns, “Williams’ Journey to *Streetcar*”, Dickson, “*A Streetcar Named Desire*,” and particularly Murphy, *Tennessee Williams & Elia Kazan*, 28–31.

<sup>10</sup> The dance originated in France in the mid-nineteenth century, and traveled to America soon after. A “genteel variation of the mazurka, incorporating elements of the waltz,” it would have been danced to a variety of songs or tunes that featured appropriate rhythms. Maurice J. E. Brown, “Varsoviennne,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy, [www.grovemusic.com](http://www.grovemusic.com) (accessed 5 July 2006). See also Annette Davison, *Alex North’s A Streetcar Named Desire: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 8283. I use the spelling “Varsouviana” as used by Williams in the reading version of the play. Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* [Reading Version] (New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1947/2004).

<sup>11</sup> Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* [Reading Version], 162 (scene ten).

<sup>12</sup> Reference to the “polka” can be found in drafts that Boyd Johns dates as composed between 1945–6, after the (undated) fragment *The Primary Colors*, but prior to the first professionally typed draft in late February 1947. Dickson dates its first inclusion to the composite ms. of *The Primary Colors*. The association of the polka with the title Varsouviana first appears in a pencil emendation in a later version of this group of revisions (those made prior to the typed draft that Williams sent to his agent, Audrey Wood, in February 1947); Blanche says that she remembers the polka and that Grey, her young husband, “taught me how to do the Var Sous Vienna.” Johns, “Williams’ Journey to *Streetcar*,” 82. The fact that the Varsouviana is a dance step rather than a tune is thus correctly noted here, though in later revisions it comes to stand for mention of the polka itself. It should also be noted that the dance step is not traditionally associated with a polka, but a waltz; it is a dance in triple time.

<sup>13</sup> *A Poker Night* [aka *Streetcar*] Tennessee Williams Collection, Box 44, Folder 11. HRHRC UT. See also Johns, “Williams’ Journey to *Streetcar*,” 82.

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<sup>14</sup> Although Williams use of the label “blue piano” is evocative, even conjuring the idea of a piano that is sad perhaps, for the purpose of this article I have elected to use the term “blues piano” in its place. I have done because this seems to better reflect what Williams probably intended in musical terms.

<sup>15</sup> Johns, “Williams’ Journey to *Streetcar*,” 119.

<sup>16</sup> Blues piano opened and closed the play, and was used at the end of scenes 2, 3, 4, 7. Honkytonk music/blues piano was to be used throughout scene 10; the scene that culminates in the rape.

<sup>17</sup> Examples include the loss of Belle Reve (scene one); Blanche’s realization that she will not experience motherhood (scene two); Stanley’s grief at beating his wife and Stella’s flight from him (scene three); the loss of Blanche’s youth and the limited options she has left.

<sup>18</sup> Examples include Stella’s horror that Stanley has told Mitch about Blanche’s past, and Blanche’s realization that she cannot escape it (scene seven); Stanley’s eruption at the birthday party (scene eight), where Williams makes reference to “negro entertainers”; Blanche’s growing sense of anxiety in the scene that leads to the rape (scene ten).

<sup>19</sup> See Alan Lomax, *Mister Jelly Roll: The Fortunes of Jelly Roll Morton, New Orleans Creole and “Inventor of Jazz”* (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1959).

<sup>20</sup> Memo from Selznick to Schneider, 11 June 1947, and from Schneider to Selznick, 2 July 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.

<sup>21</sup> Schneider Irene M. Selznick, 2 Jul 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU. Schneider also states that Lomax got off on the wrong foot with Williams immediately by criticizing Laurette Taylor’s performance: “That, to Tennessee, is heresy.”

<sup>22</sup> The decision “delighted” Williams: Engel had been Williams’ second choice after Paul Bowles, who was not available. Memo from Schneider to Selznick, 19 July 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU. The replacement of Lomax did cause some difficulty for Audrey Wood, Williams’ agent. On the suggestion of Selznick, Lomax had apparently started talking to potential musicians, although he had not yet himself signed a contract. He believed he should be paid the first instalment of his fee in lieu of the work he had already undertaken.

<sup>23</sup> Engel himself stated that his experience on *Streetcar* was “not a happy one.” Lehman Engel *This Bright Day: An Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1974), 158. A memo from Williams sent during the second series of try-outs in Boston calls into question Engel’s role, however. Williams tells Wood that the only name that should be at the top of the list of other credits is Lehman Engel, “by usual practice”: “I believe that is the proper place for it and that it will provide criticism if it does not come there, regardless of any dissatisfaction that may exist about Lehman’s work.” Letter from Williams to Audrey Wood, undated, but on headed paper from the Ritz-Carlton, Boston. Tennessee Williams Collection. Box 55, Folder 2. HRHRC UT

<sup>24</sup> Engel, *This Bright Day*, 158 (emphasis in original). Kazan also asked Engel to compose some original music for the end of scene 10 (the implied rape) during rehearsals. Though, if Engel created the cue, it was not used. “Varsouvienne adaptation into an elegy which Lehman will write.” Handwritten on Elia Kazan’s Rehearsal Script. Elia Kazan Collection. Box 19, Folder 4. Cinema Archive, Wesleyan University.

<sup>25</sup> Indeed Selznick told Schneider that once they had Lomax under contract she would emphasize to him that they should try not to use popular or current tunes in order to avoid hefty royalty charges. Memo from Irene M. Selznick to Irving Schneider, 11 June 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU,

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Engel, *This Bright Day*, 158.

<sup>28</sup> Avakian remembers these records thus: “A series of reminiscences you might say of Jelly Roll of New Orleans and the selection of music was rather broad so it was a good base to start with.” Author’s interview with Avakian, 24 May 2010.

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<sup>29</sup> Letter from Selznick to American Federation of Musicians, Attn Mr Maccarro, Local 802 (New York) 27 October 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 28, Folder 59. HGARC BU. Eddie Barefield's CV for the period noted that he played Clarinet, and Alto, Tenor and Baritone Saxophones. He had played with Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington, and conducted Ella Fitzgerald's orchestra. He had also been a staff musician and arranger for ABC under Paul Whiteman for four years. He had also arranged for Glenn Miller, Jimmie Dorsey, Charlie Barnett, and Lionel Hampton. He was a graduate of the Juilliard, and was teaching "commercial arranging and musical theory" at the School of Music of Brooklyn Free Musical Society. Barefield was paid \$170 a week as the band's official contractor. John Mehegan was at this time supplementing his performing career by teaching; he was head of the jazz department at the Metropolitan Music School and started teaching at the Juilliard School in 1947. Mehegan composed or improvised three of the show's numbers: an improvised piano solo titled "Sugar" (or "Sugar Blues"), and two numbers for the band, "Claremont Breakdown" and "Morningside Blues." This probably explains why Mehegan was paid \$125 per week, \$15 more than Vance and Strong. Vance had played first trumpet for Fletcher Henderson, Check Webb, Charlie Barnett, and others, and produced arrangements for Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Tommy Dorsey and others. He was studying at the Juilliard. Strong was a little younger and then playing with Bob Wilbur's Wildcats; the band that had formed the first of Avakian's line-ups for *Streetcar*, from which only Strong remained.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Selznick to AFM, Attn Mr Maccarro, Local 802 (New York) 27 October 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 28, Folder 59. HGARC BU.

<sup>31</sup> These were: "Sundown" by Walter Donaldson, "Four or Five Times" by Byron Gay and Marco Hellman, Art Hickman's "Rose Room", and "Wang Wang Blues", by Henry Busse, Gus Mueller, and Buster Johnson, with lyrics by Leo Wood. See memo attached to letter from Howard E Reinheimer to Selznick, 5 December 1950. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU. See also the production's promptbook: Theater Arts Collection, Robert Downing, Misc., Tennessee Williams *Streetcar Named Desire* Folder, *Streetcar Named Desire*, Mimeo/Stage Manager's Copy. HRHRC UT.

<sup>32</sup> A short score, with the handwritten words "Scored By Eddie Barefield." Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 34, Folder 8. HGARC BU. Some of the individual instrumental parts can also be found in the Audrey Wood Collection. Box 18, Folder 1. The existence of this score subsequently played an important part in action that Avakian later took against the musicians. At the suggestion of Selznick's lawyer, Howard Reinheimer, it was agreed that Avakian would be paid in the form of a commission from the musicians; above-scale rates were negotiated for the musicians to this end. Avakian took legal proceedings when the musicians refused to pay him for his work, but to no avail. There was no written contract, a score existed in Barefield's hand, and Barefield had retained Avakian's Jelly Roll Morton records. Barefield apparently argued that Avakian's involvement in the planning of the music had not been significant, and the physical evidence strengthened his position. It is also probable, however, that changes were made to the musical selections after Avakian's involvement had ended. Engel, *This Bright Day*, 158–9, and author's interview with Avakian, 24 May 2010.

<sup>33</sup> See Robert Downing, "Streetcar Conductor: Some Notes from Backstage," *Theatre Annual* Vol. 8 (1950), 25–33.

<sup>34</sup> Notes made on Saturday night Performance 1 November [New Haven]. Memo from Selznick to Kazan, 2 November 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU.

<sup>35</sup> "Sound and Music For Technical Rehearsal, 11am Wednesday November 26, 1947" by Joanna Albus (assistant stage manager). Other suggestions include: the use of echo chamber for the applause repeats; that music cues for the scene changes should be lengthened, as they were too short to fade down with the "dim-ups" in lighting; and that public domain alternatives be tried out for the rise of Act 1. It was also noted that it was "Difficult to set volume readings in an empty house." Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. Selznick found the Novachord's similarity to the organ problematic. See also Notes made on Saturday night Performance 1 November [New Haven]. Memo from Selznick to Kazan, 2 November 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU. The original decision to use a Novachord may have come from Williams, who had suggested that the polka tune/Varsouviana should be distorted or in some way made strange: "weird little music rises and dies out." Fourth page of an undated fragment labeled *The Poker Night*. Tennessee Williams Collection. Works. Box 44, Folder 9. HRHRC UT.

<sup>37</sup> Marlin was musical director on Williams' previous (and first) full-length Broadway production, *The Glass Menagerie* (1945–46). Paul Bowles had written the play's incidental music, and had been Williams' first choice to compose music for *Streetcar*. Memo from Selznick to Schneider, 19 July 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.

<sup>38</sup> Undated typed statement signed by Marlin concerning his role in preparing the memory music for *Streetcar*. Audrey Wood Collection. Box 18, Folder 1. HRHRC UT. The existent Novachord parts support this, along with the recordings, plus a wonderful, if rather bizarre recording of Tennessee Williams, John Mehegan, and Joanna Albus (the assistant stage manager), presenting a short spoof version of the play's final scene, along with the sound of the cathedral's chimes ("bong!"), and the Varsouviana, sung — with lyrics — to "Put Your Little Foot (Right There)." Tennessee Williams, Collection of Non-commercial Recordings, 1948 (catalogue no. b14530314; Research call number \*L [Special] 89–35). Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound. New York Public Library.

<sup>39</sup> There is evidence that Marlin, rather than Engel, was the arranger and composer, as well as the performer of these cues: Marlin is mentioned in a discussion over providing extracts of the play's music to accompany excerpts from the play to be performed by Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn (as Blanche and Mitch) for an episode of the US arts television programme, *Omnibus* (see letter from Hume Cronyn to Tennessee Williams, 24 October 1955, Audrey Wood Collection. Box 13, Folder 5); the deposition in which Marlin sets out his claim of authorship (see above, n. 38), alongside the set of Novachord cues written in his hand. Tennessee Williams Collection. Box 75, Folder 4 (plus oversize box 2), HRHRC UT; and letters sent from Marlin's lawyer to the Selznick Company's lawyer in which Marlin asks for financial reparation for the composition/arrangement of these cues. Letter from Robert Helfand (attorney) to Irene Selznick Company, 7 January 1958. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 27: M. HGARC BU. I should note that there are some minor differences between the Varsouviana cues written in Marlin's hand, and the copied out cues. Since the recordings appear to relate more closely to the copied out parts, my comments about these cues refer to the copied out parts.

<sup>40</sup> Kazan replaced Williams' suggested cue with the sound of a train. A discussion between Selznick and Kazan after the Boston try-outs (10–11 Nov 1947) suggests that the removal of the scene's "blue music" was still only a "tentative" decision at this stage. Letter from Kazan to Selznick, 11 Nov 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU.

<sup>41</sup> Kazan states that he "worked and worked to get this over". Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Selznick (undated), Notes to Tandy via Kazan. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU. In the same memo Selznick also suggests that Tandy should put her hand to her head in scene six, to indicate hearing the Varsouviana, and that Tandy's singing of "My Bonnie" in scene three, and of "Paper Moon" in scene seven be louder.

<sup>43</sup> Selznick, in notes written to herself regarding Uta Hagen's performance of the scene, No. 2 company, in June 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 47. HGARC BU.

<sup>44</sup> A memo sent from Selznick to Kazan during the try-outs, however, suggests that, initially at least, they may have used two Varsouviana cues here: first a major version, which Selznick suggested should die out on "intimate nature," with the minor version beginning almost immediately, at the mention of "Ambler and Ambler," and in this way "establish itself as the

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misery tune”. Selznick to Kazan, 27 October 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU.

<sup>45</sup> Max Marlin, Cue Sheet, plus Clues 3 and 3a. Tennessee Williams Collection. Box 75, Folder 4. See also oversize box 2. HRHRC UT.

<sup>46</sup> That this was the case is underlined by comments made by Selznick during the try-outs, in which she slams “Mr Novachord” for swelling the Varsouviana when Mitch rises, instead of fading when he touches Blanche, and stopping as he kisses her. Notes made on Saturday night Performance 1 November [New Haven]. Memo from Selznick to Kazan, 2 November 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU.

<sup>47</sup> The music continues through the black out and curtain up into scene nine, halting when Mitch rings the doorbell.

<sup>48</sup> The phrases start on the downbeat, rather than with an anacrusis. The upward motion of the arpeggiated bass line pushes the cue forward, while the downward leaning melody drags it down.

<sup>49</sup> A memo sent from Selznick to Kazan after the try-outs in New Haven suggests that they could “benefit” by an “increasing distortion of Varsouviana (not in arrangement but in tonal effects). Notes made on Saturday night Performance 1 November [New Haven]. Memo from Selznick to Kazan, 2 November 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU.

Marlin’s cue sheet indicates that resonators 2 and 3 are to be used, with no vibrato. Volume is also to increase as the curtain falls. Max Marlin, Cue Sheet. Tennessee Williams Collection. Box 75, Folder 4. See also oversize box 2. See also “Music and Sound Cues,” attached to memo from Joana Albus to Schneider, 26 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>50</sup> This is in addition to the cue earlier in the scene when Blanche explicitly mentions the music. According to Sarah Boyd Johns, the chanting Mexican flower vendor first appears in drafts dating from August 1947, after Williams had begun discussions with Kazan, and thus may well have been included as a result of their collaboration. The vendor appears in scene one, as Blanche searches for Stella’s apartment, and again in scene nine, chanting “flores para los muertos” beneath Blanche’s death/desire speech. Sarah Boyd Johns, “Williams’ Journey to *Streetcar*,” 134.

<sup>51</sup> Although some differences can be found in the handwritten versions of Marlin’s three composed cues, the copied out parts for the Novachord present the cues as identical, with the exception of occasional registral change, and swelling then fading volume for the final cue which continues through the play’s final curtain.

<sup>52</sup> Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, scene nine.

<sup>53</sup> The music is faded off when Mitch approaches Blanche at the end of the scene. Williams’ cue to cover the scene change into scene ten, another Varsouviana, was removed in production. The music was to begin at the very end of the scene after Blanche screams “Fire!” She chases Mitch from the apartment and then “drops to her knees, hands over ears,” the implication being that the Varsouviana is assailing her once more.

<sup>54</sup> Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, scene eleven. In her comments on the New Haven try-outs, Selznick urged that the “VARSOUVIANA should not start just at the moment that Blanche takes Doctor’s arm inasmuch as novachord [sic] has organ overtones whole thing seems like bridal march.” Notes made on Saturday night Performance 1 November [New Haven]. Memo from Selznick to Kazan, 2 November 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, the description of exchanges between Williams and Kazan in Kazan, *A Life* (London: André Deutsch, 1988), 329–330, 346.

<sup>56</sup> Notes made on Saturday night Performance 1 November [New Haven]. Memo from Selznick to Kazan, 2 November 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 46, Folder 46. HGARC BU.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. In the same notes, Selznick also states that she is happy to accept something “snappier” occasionally, however, as with the scenes featuring the poker players, for example.

<sup>59</sup> Barefield’s handwritten score and the recordings made of the second touring company demonstrate that the number wasn’t replaced, despite criticism that continued through try-outs up until the technical rehearsal in late November, when it was requested that “other numbers in ‘available-public-domain’ catalogue for rise of Act 1” be tried. Specific suggestions were included: “Vieux Carre Blues” or even a version of “Paper Moon,” which Selznick already had permission to use. “Sound and Music For Technical Rehearsal, 11am Wednesday November 26, 1947” by Joanna Albus (assistant stage manager). Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>60</sup> The title of this number, and of “Morningside Heights” referred to the location of the Julliard, where Vance was a student, and where Mehegan had recently started teaching. At this time the Julliard was situated on Claremont Avenue in Morningside Heights. Author’s interview with Avakian, 24 May 2010.

<sup>61</sup> The left hand of the piano part features sequences of stride style plus sequences of a walking bass in octaves or tenths. Later verses incorporate call and response, between the right hand of the piano part and the lead instruments (clarinet, sometimes with trumpet). The lead shifts from sustained arpeggio-based lines in earlier verses through to short snap motifs, and the basic rhythmic figure of the fifth verse, and from solo clarinet through to the addition of trumpet, with verses that feature adlib solos on both instruments, sometimes performed with a counter-melody. As noted above, not all parties were satisfied with the cue.

<sup>62</sup> This cue also indicates the elision of time between Blanche’s arrival and late the next day as Blanche and Stella prepare for an evening out, to avoid the poker game.

<sup>63</sup> The end of the previous scene was indicated by a variety of street cries, replacing Williams’ original suggestion of “Paper Doll” played by “negro entertainers” to cover the scene change. “4 or 5 Times” opens with clarinet (with piano doubling) playing a syncopated anacrusis, followed by a semi-breve. This is repeated (with the harmony beneath altered), then lowered by a tone and modified to create the consequent four bar phrase. These four bar phrases create a 16-bar unit (ABAB’). Subsequent units involve the repetition of the piano accompaniment, while the clarinet part is further elaborated.

<sup>64</sup> See also Murphy, Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan, 30.

<sup>65</sup> “Blues tempo – gouge [dirge?] – miseries. Clarinet leads trumpet fills. Muted and dirty [...]” “Music and Sound Cues,” attached to memo from Joana Albus to Schneider, 26 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>66</sup> Murphy, Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan, 30

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. During the same cue it is also revealed that Stella is pregnant. Though not presented here, the somewhat sentimental lyrics of the song, as reflected in its subtitle, “When Love is Calling Me Home,” would probably have been familiar to at least some members of the play’s audience, who might have recalled these words and noted Blanche’s position as the third wheel in this new family scenario.

<sup>69</sup> Tennessee Williams, *A Poker Night* [later re-titled, *A Streetcar Named Desire*]. Pre-production typescript. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 30, Folder 4. Sarah Boyd Johns dates this typescript to late February 1947. See Johns, “Williams’ Journey to *Streetcar*.”

<sup>70</sup> “No choruses – no introduction, clarinet and trumpet leads nasty stomp (fade down as curtain rises [...]).” “Music and Sound Cues,” attached to memo from Joana Albus to Schneider, 26 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>71</sup> Tennessee Williams, *A Poker Night* [later re-titled, *A Streetcar Named Desire*]. Pre-production typescript. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 30, Folder 4. HGARC BU.

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<sup>72</sup> “Trumpet with hat. Long notes, forceful — bounce.” “Music and Sound Cues,” attached to memo from Joana Albus to Schneider, 26 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU. Trumpet leads, piano doubles, and clarinet harmonizes, occasionally adding ornamentation. After a scalic anacrusis, the music features groups of three sustained pitches in step-wise descent (e.g. G, F, E flat; B flat, A flat, G) joined by further scalic figures with occasional chromatic alterations. Given the up-beat, light sound of the number, I disagree with Murphy’s statement that the cue is “the most obvious encoding of sexuality in the music.” Murphy, Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan, 30. Prior to viewing the score for the cue written out by Barefield, and hearing the second company performing a version of it, I had elsewhere suggested that this same cue could be taken together with those heard within scenes three and eight, to emphasize a connection with Stanley. Indeed, making a point similar to Murphy’s, I suggested that the cues articulate “carnal desire. The first two cases [sc. 3 and 8] suggest the importance of sex in the couple’s relationship, the last the potential for sexual violence when desire is unrestrained by morality.” Davison, *Alex North’s A Streetcar Named Desire*, 84.

<sup>73</sup> Michel Chion introduced the term anempathy in relation film music and/or sound, but it is also apposite here. It refers to music or sound in a film that exhibits “conspicuous indifference to the situation, by progressing in a steady, undaunted, and ineluctable manner: the scene takes place against this very backdrop of ‘indifference.’ This juxtaposition of scene with indifferent music has the effect not of freezing emotion but rather of intensifying it, by inscribing it on a cosmic background. [...] The anempathetic impulse in the cinema produces those countless musical bits from player pianos, celestes, music boxes, and dance bands, whose studied frivolity and naïveté reinforced the individual emotion of the character and of the spectator, even as the music pretends not to notice them.” Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. Edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 8.

<sup>74</sup> Letter from Albert Da Silva of Reinheimer’s office to Irene M. Selznick Company. 25 July 1951. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>75</sup> “Music and Sound Cues,” attached to memo from Joana Albus to Schneider, 26 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>76</sup> This section is marked as cue 4 ½ in the score. At this point, rising chromatic figures in sets of quaver triplets are introduced on solo clarinet, built on a chromatic descent.

<sup>77</sup> The cue continues until Mitch re-enters the scene, after Blanche has seen her sister’s reunion with Stanley in the darkness of the apartment. Those who are familiar with Kazan’s film adaptation will note the similar importance attributed to the clarinet in the lead up to Stanley’s cries for his wife. See Davison, *Alex North’s A Streetcar Named Desire*, 125–6.

<sup>78</sup> “Rose Room,” is based on 16-bar frame, though it is freer in style than one would expect of a 12- or 16-bar blues structure. Performed slowly, the clarinet’s melody follows a wide-ranging, melancholic line that mixes sustained pitches with more mobile eighth note figures. The harmony is quite enriched and mobile also, and is performed in a stride style on the piano, while in the upper register the pianist doubles the clarinet.

<sup>79</sup> “Music and Sound Cues,” attached to memo from Joana Albus to Schneider, 26 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>80</sup> The number, “Sugar Blues,” was composed and/or improvised by the band’s pianist, John Mehegan, for piano and drums. There is a lilting rhythm to the accompaniment generated by a repeated arpeggiated figure, and the melody describes a gentle quaver-led line. It is likely that it was decided that Mehegan improvise this number at relatively short notice. A letter from Harry Link at Leo Feist inc. Music Publishers to Selznick, dated 28 October 1947, states that the Link had just been notified that the request for the number “Sugar” was involved in litigation: “the song will have to be eliminated and I’m sure there is something else among the titles in the catalog I sent you that will substitute.” Letter from Harry Link to Selznick, 28 October 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.



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<sup>81</sup> Elia Kazan, "Notebook for *A Streetcar Named Desire*," in *Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theatre*, edited by Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy (London: Peter Owen, 1973), 371.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> That is, jazz presenting the body, blackness, sexuality, and America, while the Varsouviana cues present nostalgia for old Europe, refinement, the mind, and denial of the body. See also Davison, *Alex North's A Streetcar Named Desire*, 97–101.

<sup>84</sup> According to reviews of the production, Tandy's characterization of Blanche was noted for its fragility, by contrast to the full-bodied and overtly sensual performance given by Vivien Leigh in the debut UK production in 1949. See Leonard J. Leff, "And Transfer to Cemetary: The Streetcars Named Desire," *Film Quarterly* 55/3 (Spring 2002), 32. The reviews echo comments made by Karl Malden in comparing Tandy's performance of Blanche on stage with Vivien Leigh's for Kazan's later film adaptation of the play. Malden played Mitch in both productions. Malden on DVD Commentary to Special Edition DVD of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Warner Bros., 2006).

<sup>85</sup> Charles R. Iucci, "Musicians Sound Sharp Notes," *New York Times*, 5 January 1947. See also letter from Schneider to Selznick 20 June 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.

<sup>86</sup> Charles R. Iucci, "Musicians Sound Sharp Notes," *New York Times*, 5 January 1947.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. See also letter from Schneider to Selznick 20 June 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.

<sup>91</sup> It should perhaps also be noted that *The Glass Menagerie* opened at the end of March 1945, prior to the introduction of the third classification category.

<sup>92</sup> See also letter from Schneider to Selznick 20 June 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.

<sup>93</sup> The play's incidental music was by Lehman Engel, with an orchestra conducted by Max Marlin. [n.a.] "King Henry VIII", Internet Broadway Database <http://www.ibdb.com/production.php?id=1476> (accessed 6 July 2011). See also Engel, *This Bright Day*, 156

<sup>94</sup> Fees would have been \$138 for each of the musicians, for 8 performances or less in 6 days, and \$207 for the manager of the personnel (i.e. 50% more). The cost would have been \$1173 per week, rather than the \$690 she was currently paying for the five musicians Selznick had engaged.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from Selznick to Iucci (AFM, Local 802), 19 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 36. HGARC BU.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. (emphasis in original). It should perhaps be pointed out that Selznick's fourth point — "no original music has been written for the show" — was somewhat contentious. Selznick's view was presumably based on the idea that Marlin's additional Varsouviana cues were arrangements or variations on "Put Your Little Foot," and that the cues written and/or performed by Mehegan ("Claremont Breakdown," "Morningside Blues," and "Sugar Blues") were improvisations.

<sup>97</sup> Letter from Selznick to Iucci (AFM, Local 802), 19 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 36. HGARC BU.

<sup>98</sup> Letter from Selznick to "Jimmy" [Petrillo], 19 December 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.

<sup>99</sup> With the exception of the final paragraphs, the letter is almost identical to that sent to Iucci at the Local.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from Local 802 to AFM International Executive Board, 10 February 1948 re: Case no. 770, 1947-48. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 36. HGARC BU.

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- <sup>101</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>103</sup> Letter from Irene M. Selznick Company to AFM International Executive Board, 22 February 1948. Box 45, Folder 36. HGARC BU.
- <sup>104</sup> Letter from Local 802 to AFM International Executive Board, 10 February 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 36. HGARC BU
- <sup>105</sup> Letter from Irene M. Selznick Company to AFM International Executive Board, 22 February 1948. Box 45, Folder 36. HGARC BU.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>107</sup> Letter from Leo Cluesman (AFM, International Executive Board) to Irene M. Selznick Company 24 June 1948. Box 45, Folder 36. HGARC BU.
- <sup>108</sup> Irene M. Selznick, *A Private View* (New York: Knopf, 1983), 314.
- <sup>109</sup> Irene M. Selznick, *A Private View*, 314.
- <sup>110</sup> Ibid., 315.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>112</sup> “We each had a limousine outside. Mine was without a bodyguard. We let his follow. I took him to my apartment.” Ibid.
- <sup>113</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>114</sup> [n.a.] “NY Theaters, AFM To Settle Fuss on Dramas With Music,” in *The Billboard*, 6 November 1948, 50.
- <sup>115</sup> Letter from The League of New York Theatres to their members, 21 March 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 35. HGARC BU.
- <sup>116</sup> Uta Hagen then performed as Blanche with the original cast for a further four weeks while Tandy continued her break. Kolin *Williams: A Streetcar Named Desire*, 33–34.
- <sup>117</sup> Letter from Selznick to Petrillo, 8 March 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.
- <sup>118</sup> Letter from Selznick to Mr Benkert (Secretary, Local 10, AFM), 7 April 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>121</sup> Letter from Petrillo to Selznick, 19 April 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU. The AFM had organized its first nationwide recording ban in 1941 in response to the displacement of live musicians by recorded music. The ban not only led to anger in the broadcasting, film and recording industries, it also drew the attention of the Federal Government. As Tim J. Anderson explains in *Making Easy Listening*, a key demand of the first ban was that a “fixed royalty [...] be administered and received by the union for each recording and transcription manufactured and sold.” This was to form the basis of the union’s Recording and Transcription trust fund, with income redistributed to live music projects that would provide work for unemployed musicians, while also benefiting communities across the country. In 1947 the Recording and Transcription Fund was criminalized via the Taft-Hartley Labor Relations Act, which followed the Lea Act (1946), in which it made illegal the AFM provision that broadcasters would have to hire musicians to offset the broadcast of recordings. The second ban took place in 1948, and Anderson describes it as an attempt to deal with “counterreformation wherein private capital rolled back some of the AFM’s more important gains in order to reclaim power once lost.” The four months’ notice given, however, allowed the recording industry to rush through extra recordings — including a great many cover versions of songs in their back catalogues — and stockpile them in advance of the strike. It seems that union members Negotiations during the second recording ban enabled the creation of the Music Performance Trust Fund, which could operate legally within the Taft-Hartley Act. “Buried Under the Fecundity of His Own Creations’: Reconsidering the Recording Bans of the American Federation of Musicians, 1942–44 and 1948,”

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in *American Music* 22/2 (Summer 2004), 241; 249. Parts of this article appear in chapters one and two of Timothy J. Anderson *Making Easy Listening: Material Culture and Postwar American Recording* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2006). See also James P. Kraft, *Stage to Studio: Musicians and the Sound Revolution, 1890–1950* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), chapter 7.

<sup>122</sup> Letter from Petrillo to Selznick, 19 April 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.

<sup>123</sup> Letter from Selznick to Petrillo, 4 May 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Bud Jacobson seems also to have been involved. In a letter to “Gertrude,” written in July 1948, Schneider states that Avakian has written to Jacobson, who knows jazz musicians in Chicago. Avakian has “written to him to make him aware of our problems.” Letter from Schneider to “Gertrude,” 28 July 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>128</sup> At least, that was Schneider’s plan, in July 1948. Memo from Schneider to Selznick, 28 July 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.

<sup>129</sup> Letter from Petrillo to Selznick, 27 July 1948. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.

<sup>130</sup> In this letter, Selznick states that she withdrew her earlier request to use a recorded version of the music for the touring company of *Streetcar* because Mr Riccardi explained that it would “prejudice the Federation’s position on standby labor.” Letter from Selznick to Petrillo, 7 April 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.

<sup>131</sup> Rex Riccardi was Petrillo’s executive assistant at this point.

<sup>132</sup> “It is the only practical method of helping our musicians to keep the original line, tempo and mood of the music. Since the music is of an improvisatory nature and there is no complete accurate orchestration to follow, deviations have been inevitable. Occasional reference by our musicians to the recorded version is the only accurate way of correcting themselves and insuring consistent performances.” Letter from Selznick to Petrillo, 7 April 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Letter from Petrillo to Selznick, 21 April 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.

<sup>136</sup> The recordings exist. Irene M. Selznick Collection, Box 34, Folder 8. *A Streetcar Named Desire*: Music. a) Recording of jazz music (Separately wrapped) 78s. HGARC BU.

<sup>137</sup> Letter from Schneider to Selznick, dated 19 August 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.

<sup>138</sup> Schneider assumed that Max Marlin was the culprit since he had initially been resistant to making a recording.

<sup>139</sup> Letter from Schneider to Selznick, dated 19 August 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

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- <sup>146</sup> Letter from Schneider to Riccardi, 22 August 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.
- <sup>147</sup> Letter from Max Siegel to Riccardi, 24 August 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 37. HGARC BU.
- <sup>148</sup> Letter from Schneider to Selznick, 4 September 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.
- <sup>149</sup> These musicians would likely have been H Ray Durant and James Rosebaro, though I have not yet been able to identify the Novachord player.
- <sup>150</sup> Letter from Schneider to Selznick, 4 September 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.
- <sup>151</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>152</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>153</sup> "The Beaumont people tell me the recordings are fine, but L.O. has not yet heard them. Hope for the best. Apparently everybody there did a masterful job, not only on this but also on all that technical stuff and big cue script you sent last week." Letter from Selznick to Schneider, 6 September 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.
- <sup>154</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>155</sup> Letter from Selznick to Schneider, 13 September 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.
- <sup>156</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>157</sup> Wire from Petrillo to Selznick, quoted in letter from Schneider to Selznick, 24 September 1949. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.
- <sup>158</sup> Irene M. Selznick Collection, Box 34, Folder 8. HGARC BU.
- <sup>159</sup> Author's interview with Avakian, 24 May 2010.
- <sup>160</sup> Author's interview with Avakian, 24 May 2010. Some of these tracks can be found on *Sidney Bechet: The Essential Collection* AVC 994 (The Avid Group): "Spreadin' Joy," "I Had It But It's All Gone Now," "Polka Dot Stomp," and "Kansas City Man Blues."
- <sup>161</sup> These discs were on the General Label and, if Roy Carew is correct, they were likely GL 1703, 1706, 1707 and 1710. R. J. Carew, "Those Jelly Roll Songs," *The Jazz Finder* magazine, August 1948, 3–4. Also available online via "R. J. Carew: Articles on New Orleans, Tony Jackson, Ragtime, and Mister Jelly Roll himself" at <http://www.doctorjazz.co.uk/page26.html> (accessed 15 November 2010).
- <sup>162</sup> Phil Pastras, *Dead Man Blues: Jelly Roll Morton Way Out West* (Berkeley: University of California Press and Chicago: Center for Black Music Research, 2001), 209–210.
- <sup>163</sup> Letter to Howard Reinheimer from Schneider, 13 December 1950. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.
- <sup>164</sup> Memo from Schneider to Selznick, 7 June 1951. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.
- <sup>165</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>167</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>168</sup> Letter from Albert Da Silva of Reinheimer's office to Irene M. Selznick Company. 25 July 1951. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 38. HGARC BU.
- <sup>169</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>170</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>171</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>172</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>173</sup> The case was Shapiro, Bernstein v Miracle Records, 86 Patent Quarterly 193, by an Illinois District Court. Ibid.
- <sup>174</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>175</sup> Letter from Reinheimer to Selznick, 11 January 1954, with attached legal document concerning Civil Action File No. 62-73. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 45, Folder 39. HGARC BU.

<sup>176</sup> Letter from Robert Helfand (attorney) to Irene Selznick Company, 7 January 1958. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 27: M. HGARC BU.

<sup>177</sup> Davison, *Alex North's A Streetcar Named Desire*, 84, 95–97, 120, 131. A primary means by which this ambiguity is developed, is in presenting cues with formal structures that approximate autonomous forms, such as the 12-bar blues, or a 16-bar song structure, and with instrumentation that is similar to that performed by the musicians in the *Four Deuces*. This is true of the film's cues associated with Stanley, but also with the theme which is to become associated with the growing fondness between Blanche and Mitch, first heard during the poker game scene, which appears to be source music drifting in through the windows. In the film, we also see these musicians, albeit partially and briefly, as Blanche wanders along the street, trying to find her sister's apartment.

<sup>178</sup> Murphy, *Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan*, 31.

<sup>179</sup> Davison, *Alex North's A Streetcar Named Desire*, 84.

<sup>180</sup> Space has not allowed discussion of the song "Paper Moon," sung by Blanche in scene seven, alas.

<sup>181</sup> Engel and Avakian recommended that the musicians be offered "run of the play" contracts, to offer a basic level of job security. Avakian and Engel argued that because such hand picked musicians made a living through one-off or occasional jobs in New York, leaving town for the try-outs (when there was no guarantee that music would be retained when the production opened) would present a risky proposition for them. Selznick was required to contract players who were members of the (New York) local branch of the AFM. Memo from Schneider to Selznick, 11 June 1947. Irene M. Selznick Collection. Box 44, Folder 28. HGARC BU.

<sup>182</sup> Anderson, *Making Easy Listening*, 8.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 11–12.

<sup>184</sup> Concerning the AFM-led strikes on Broadway in 1975 and 2003, see, for example, Gary Younge, "Strike gives Broadway the show stopper it did not want," *The Guardian*, 10 March 2003 (accessed 12 July 2011). Recent campaigns include "Save Live Music on Broadway" <http://savelivemusiconbroadway.com/> (accessed 12 July 2011). The issue is not confined to Broadway, or indeed North America, either. In 2004, some of the orchestral parts for the London West End production of *Les Misérables* were replaced by synthesized samples when the production was moved to a smaller theatre, much to the chagrin of the UK's Musicians' Union. See, for example, Sally Bramley "MU opposes Les Mis replacing live musicians with machine at Queens," *The Stage* (News), <http://www.thestage.co.uk/news/newsstory.php/276/mu-opposes-les-mis-replacing-live-musicians>, 20 January 2004 (accessed 12 July 2011); Jack Malvern, "Computer to replace Les Mis musicians," *Times Online*, 13 February 2004 <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1019105.ece> (accessed 12 July 2011).

<sup>185</sup> James P. Kraft, *Stage to Studio*, 201.